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Martyrdoms of the Apostles of Hagia Sophia at Ohrid

The Painted Cycle in the ParekklēSION above the Diaconicon

MARKA TOMIĆ

Scholarship has largely addressed the upper-story *Sparekklēsia* (chapels) located on the eastern side of Middle Byzantine churches, exploring their architectural design, meaning, and functions.¹ Regrettably, our knowledge of the upper-story parekklēsia's painted decoration is fragmentary due to the almost complete loss of frescoes on their walls. The church of Hagia Sophia at Ohrid is of particular importance in this regard because it is, to the best of my knowledge, the only example of such an architectural arrangement that has a surviving pictorial ensemble (Fig. 1). As we will see below, the decorative system in the parekklēSION above the diaconicon of Hagia Sophia is very much in line with the well-established Byzantine practice of adornment

of subsidiary chapels.² The central part of this small iconographic program, on the other hand, contains the unique example of the cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles in Middle Byzantine monumental art, which I will analyze in this study.

The cathedral of the archbishops of Ohrid was built³ and decorated⁴ under the artistic patronage of

1 S. Ćurčić, "Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches," *JSAH* 36.2 (1977): 94–110, at 106–10; B. Schellewald, "Zur Typologie, Entwicklung und Funktion von Oberräumen in Syrien, Armenien und Byzanz," *JbAC* 27–28 (1984–1985): 171–218; N. Teteriatnikov, "Upper-Story Chapels near the Sanctuary in Churches of the Christian East," *DOP* 42 (1988): 65–72; and V. Marinis, "The Original Form of the Theotokos *tou Libos* Reconsidered," in *Απόδοση τιμής στην ομότιμη καθηγήτρια Μαίρη Παναγιωτίδη-Κερίτσογλου*, ed. P. Petrides and V. Phoskolou (Athens, 2015), 267–303, at 277–83. See also V. Marinis, "Defining Liturgical Space," in *The Byzantine World*, ed. P. Stephenson (London, 2010), 284–302, at 296–98; V. Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople: Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries* (New York, 2014), 77–87; V. Marinis, "Parekklesion," *RBK* 7:723–58; and R. G. Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (New York, 2019), 261–64, 318–21.

2 For the decorative aspects of parekklēsia, see G. Babić, "Chapelles laterales des églises serbes du XIII^e siècle et leur décor peint," in *L'art byzantin du XIII^e siècle: Symposium de Sopoćani, 1965*, ed. V. J. Đurić (Belgrade, 1967), 179–88; G. Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques* (Paris, 1969), 79–173; and Marinis, "Parekklesion," 753–56.

3 For the architecture of Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, see B. M. Schellewald, "Die Architektur der Sophienkirche in Ohrid" (PhD diss., University of Bonn, 1986); V. Korać, "Sveta Sofija u Ohridu, prostor, struktura, oblici: Izvori," *Zograf* 32 (2008): 29–35; and S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven, CT, 2010), 398–400.

4 The bibliography on the eleventh-century frescoes in Hagia Sophia is extensive. See especially V. J. Đurić, *Vizantijske freske u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade, 1974), 179–80; C. Grozdanov, "Proučavanje na živopisot na Sveta Sofija Ohridska," in *Studii za ohridskiot živopis* (Skopje, 1990), 24–34; and B. Schellewald, "Ohrid," *RBK* 7:252–353, at 252–75, 350–53. The role of Archbishop Leo in the creation of the decorative program of Hagia Sophia has been explored by R. Ljubinković, "Les influences de la vie politique contemporaine sur la décoration des églises d'Ohrid," in *Actes du XII^e Congrès international d'études byzantines*, vol. 3 (Belgrade, 1964), 221–25, at 222–24; S. Radojčić, "Prilozi za istoriju najstarijeg ohridskog slikarstva," *ZRVI* 8.2 (1964): 355–82, at 380; and A. W. Epstein, "The Political Content of the Painting of Saint Sophia at Ohrid," *JÖB* 29 (1980): 315–29, at 315–25, and recently elaborated by B. Todić, "Représentations des Papes Romains dans l'église Sainte

Fig. 1.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
view from the east.
Photo courtesy of the
Institute for Byzantine
Studies, Serbian
Academy of Sciences
and Arts, Belgrade.



Fig. 2.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
view from the northeast.
Photo courtesy of the
Institute for Byzantine
Studies, Serbian
Academy of Sciences
and Arts, Belgrade.



Archbishop Leo (1037–1056), a former chartophylax of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, appointed by Emperor Michael IV and the “first among Greeks”

archbishop in Ohrid in 1037 (Fig. 2).⁵ Eastern upper-story chapels were erected as part of the original building, constructed as a three-aisle, vaulted basilica with a central dome, a projecting transept, a three-part sanctuary at the eastern end, and a narthex in the west (Fig. 3).

Sophie d’Ohrid: Contribution à l’idéologie de l’archêveché d’Ohrid,” *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.* 29 (2008): 105–18; and B. Todić, “Arhiepiskop Lav – Tvorac ikonografskog programa fresaka u Svetoj Sofiji Ohridskoj,” in *Vizantijski svet na Balkanu*, vol. 1, ed. B. Krsmanović, L. Maksimović, and R. Radić (Belgrade, 2012), 119–34.

5 For the most recent biography of Leo of Ohrid, see E. Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon von Ohrid (1037–1056): Leben und Werk (mit den Texten seiner bisher unedierte asketischen Schrift und seiner drei Briefe an den Papst)* (Bamberg, 2007).

In her compelling reconstruction of the original form of the oldest architectural heart of Hagia Sophia, Barbara Schellewald suggests that the now lost parekklēsia once stood above the western parts of the aisles (Fig. 4).⁶ Only the monumental decoration in the parekklēsia above the diaconicon has been partially preserved. These frescoes, however, are not part of the original decorative program of the church. The apse displayed an image of the Deesis in the conch and, below it, two full-length archangel figures. The second fresco register of the northern and eastern walls received twelve images of the apostolic martyrdoms (Fig. 5).⁷ These enclosed and independent chapels above the pastophoria were not visible from the interior of the building.

The inaccessibility of the imagery of the parekklēsia over the diaconicon is perhaps one reason why it has remained insufficiently explored. Earlier scholarship was mainly concerned with two aspects: the stylistic identity of the frescoes and their dating. Various scholars offered a range of opinions;⁸ Vojislav Đurić recognized the early Komnenian features of the frescoes and suggested dating them to the late eleventh or the

beginning of the twelfth century.⁹ Even less attention was given to the cycle of apostolic martyrdoms. The first and so far only short study on the cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles was published by Petar Miljković Pepek in 1961.¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, Gordana Babić explored the liturgical function of the parekklēsia based on its iconographic program.¹¹ In recent years, overviews of the extant pictorial cycle have been provided by Goce Angeličin Žura.¹² While acknowledged in scholarship, the painted cycle of apostolic martyrdoms from Ohrid has been rarely explored beyond the boundaries of former Yugoslavia. The significance of this example for Byzantine art history is considerable, especially given that Byzantine cycles of apostolic martyrdoms have not been the subject of a systematic study.¹³

The first section of this contribution provides a comparative study of the apostles' martyrial iconography in the art of Byzantium and beyond. It sets the stage for identifying previously unidentified scenes, reconstructing the original content of the Ohrid apostolic cycle, and acquiring a more nuanced image of the cycle's cultural orientation. This study also addresses the larger question of how these frescoes bear witness to the parallel development of menologion imagery and the cycles of the Martyrdoms of the Apostles, demonstrating simultaneously close connections between book illumination, icon painting, metalwork, mosaic, and fresco decoration during the Middle Byzantine period. In the second section, liturgical celebration in honor of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles and cultic devotion to the apostles in Constantinople—essential for the

6 Schellewald, "Die Architektur der Sophienkirche," 34–115, esp. 77–82, rek. pls. I (reconstructed ground plan), II (gallery plan).

7 G. Millet, *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie (Serbie, Macédoine et Monténégro)*, fasc. 1 (Paris, 1954), pls. 11.1–4, 12.1; and P. Miljković Pepek, "Materijali za istorijatu na srednovekovnoto slikarstvo vo Makedonija 2: Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski od Sv. Sofija vo Ohrid," *Zbornik: Arheološkiot muzej – Skopje* 3 (1959–1960): 99–105.

8 The wall paintings in the upper-story chapel have been associated in scholarship with the artistic patronage of several archbishops of Ohrid: Leo (1037–1056), Theophylact (from 1088/1089), Demetrios Chomatenos (from 1216/1217), and Constantine Kabasilas (before 1259); see R. Ljubinković, "Sveta Sofija u Ohridu," in *Konzervatorski radovi na crkvi Sv. Sofije u Ohridu* (Belgrade, 1955), 9–18; R. Ljubinković and M. Ćorović-Ljubinković, "Srednovekovnoto slikarstvo vo Ohrid," in *Zbornik na trudovi, Naroden muzej vo Ohrid* (Ohrid, 1961), 101–48, at 110; R. Ljubinković, "La peinture murale en Serbie et en Macédoine aux XI^e et XII^e siècles," *Corsi Rav* 9 (1962): 405–41; D. Koco, "Nouvelles considérations sur l'église de Sainte-Sophie à Ohrid," *ArchIug* 2 (1956): 139–144, at 140; Todić, "Arhiepiskop Lav," 121, n. 10; and I. Alexeev, "The Cycle of Apostolic Martyrdom in the Chapel over the Southern Altar in the Church of St. Sophia in Ohrid," in *VIII International Conference: Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art; Abstracts of Communications*, ed. S. V. Maltseva, E. I. Stanyukovich-Denisova, and A. V. Zakharova (Moscow, 2018), 111–12. See also a brief overview of the scholarship on the wall paintings in the upper-story chapel: I. Alexeev, "Bokovye kapelly vtorogo iarusu sobora Svjatoj Sofii v Ohride," *Mezhdunarodnyi nauchno-issledovatel'skii zhurnal* 3–3.117 (2022): 158–60.

9 Đurić, *Vizantijske freske*, 12, n. 6.

10 The study includes descriptions, important remarks about their iconography, and identifications of a number of surviving scenes. See Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski."

11 Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*, 111–17, figs. 76–82.

12 G. Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata na Sveta Sofija Ohridska* (Ohrid, 2013); and G. Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata nad ġakonikonot vo Sv. Sofija Ohridska," *Prilozi MANU: Oddelenie za pštvenii nauki* 44.1–2 (2013): 45–56.

13 J. Myslivec, "Zyklen der Tätigkeit u. Martyrien der Apostel," *LChri* 1:169–73, at 170–71; and J. Myslivec, "Život apoštolu v byzantském umění," in *Dvě studie z dějin byzantského umění* (Prague, 1948), 94–148, at 94–106, for references to notable examples. Investigations of individual cycles have significantly contributed to the study of the subject. See especially L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), 245–57.

Fig. 3.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
reconstructed ground plan.
Drawing by Vladan Zdravković,
after Milan Zloković, Barbara
Schellewald, Vojislav Korać, and
Sašo Korunovski; courtesy of
the Institute for Byzantine
Studies, Serbian Academy of
Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

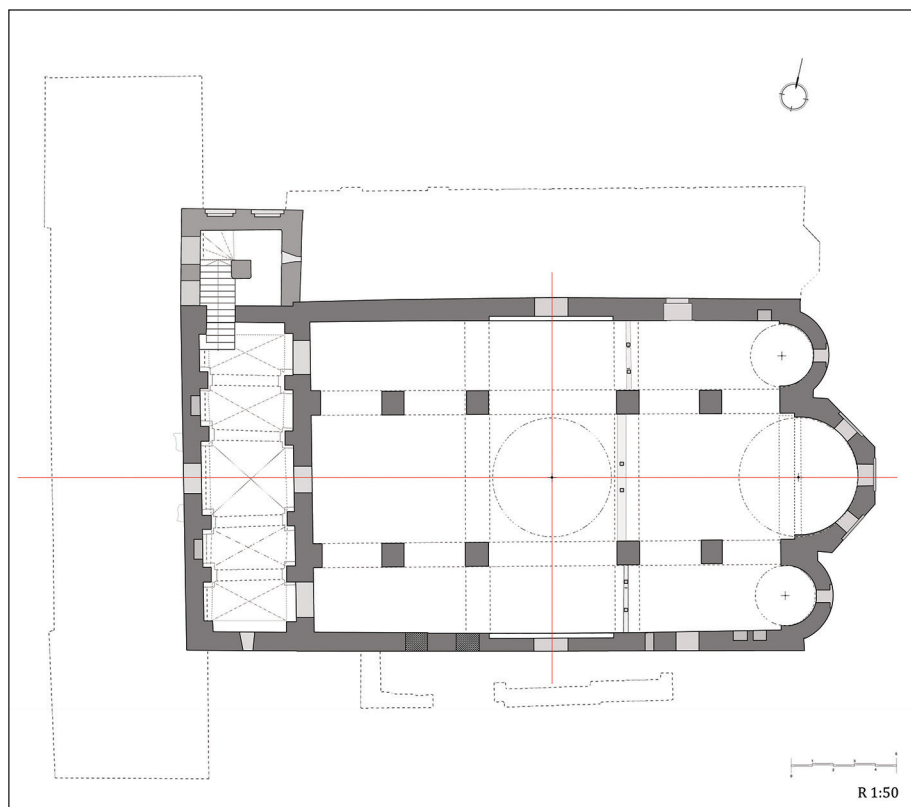
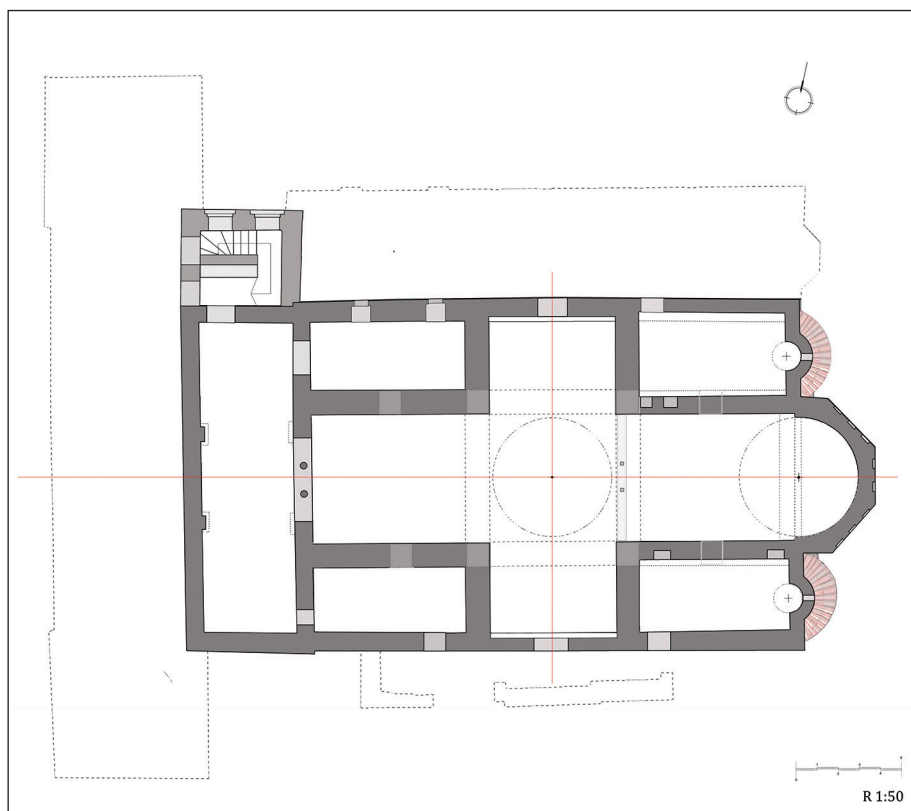


Fig. 4.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
reconstructed gallery plan.
Drawing by Vladan Zdravković,
after Milan Zloković, Barbara
Schellewald, Vojislav Korać, and
Sašo Korunovski; courtesy of
the Institute for Byzantine
Studies, Serbian Academy of
Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.



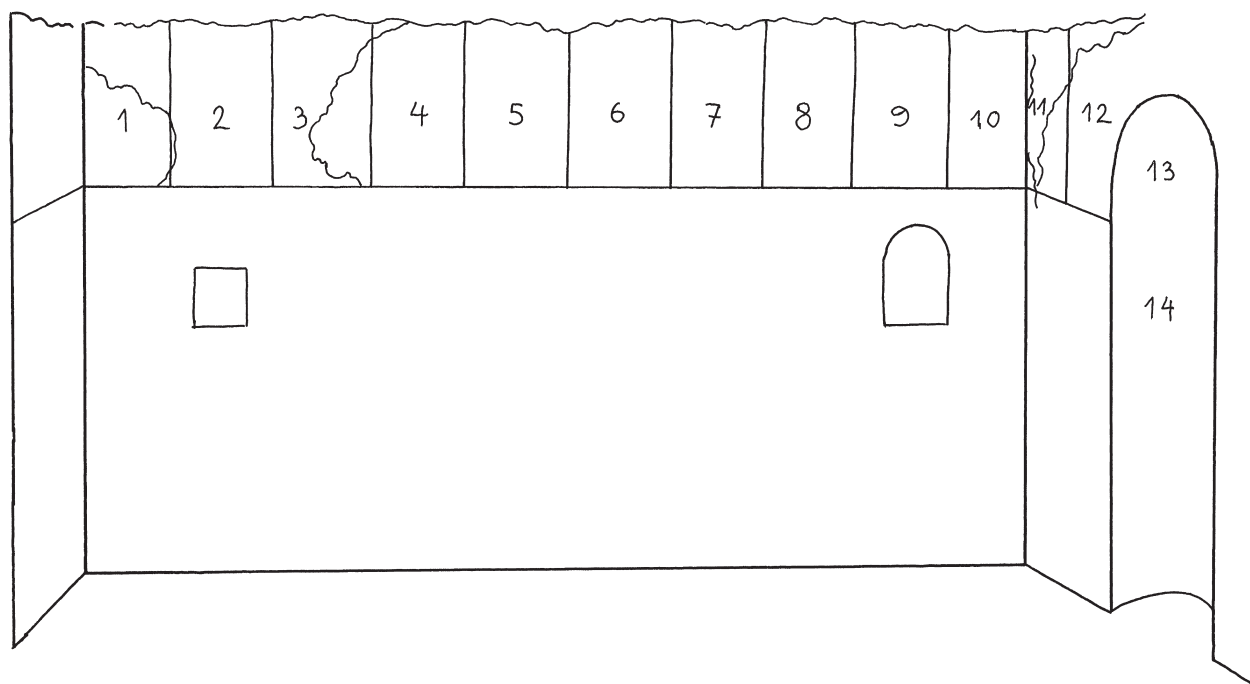


Fig. 5. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, parekklēsiōn above the diaconicon, disposition of the frescoes. Drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Unidentified scene
(burial of St. Luke the Evangelist) | 7. Martyrdom of the apostle Andrew |
| 2. Destroyed scene | 8. Martyrdom of the apostle Simon the Zealot |
| 3. Fragment of the unidentified scene
(burial of St. John the Theologian?) | 9. Martyrdom of the apostle Philip |
| 4. Unidentified scene
(burial of St. Matthew the Evangelist) | 10. Martyrdom of the apostle Bartholomew |
| 5. Martyrdom of the apostle Paul | 11. Fragment of the unidentified scene
(martyrdom of the apostle James, son of Zebedee?) |
| 6. Martyrdom of the apostle Peter | 12. Martyrdom of the apostle Thomas |
| | 13. Deesis |
| | 14. Archangels |

Ohrid apostolic cycle—will be analyzed through pieces of evidence preserved in synaxaria, hagiographical texts, homilies, and poems. The discussion sheds light on the role of these sources in the formation of the collegium of the twelve apostles from the late ninth to the end of the twelfth century in Constantinople and their reflections in the composition of the cycles dedicated to martyrdoms of the apostles in Byzantine art of that time. The inquiry of both aspects—iconographic and cultic—has informed the dating of the frescoes depicting the martyrdoms of the apostles at Ohrid to the late eleventh/early twelfth century, most probably under the patronage of Archbishop Theophylact of Ohrid. The third section employs several different approaches to advance the understanding of the painted ensemble within its

respective contexts. The first approach focuses on the spatial setting of the wall paintings within the cathedral environment. It examines how the upper-story parekklēsiōn was accessed and who used it. The second method concentrates on the function of this small space and its interaction with its painted decoration. The analysis allows us to evaluate the liturgical activity in the upper-story parekklēsiōn and its dedication. The third approach takes a closer look at the performative aspect of the images, aiming to enhance our understanding of how their original viewers might have perceived them. Finally, I situate the painted ensemble of the upper-story parekklēsiōn within the context of the archbishopric's seat that gave rise to it. I focus on the ideological program of the Archbishopric of Ohrid and

its connection to Constantinople and take up questions of the agency of images and patrons.

Due to the inaccessibility of the upper-story south parekklēision, my study of the apostolic cycle is based on the holdings of the photographic archive of the Legacy of Dušan and Ružica Tasić, University of Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy, and some newly available photographs of the surviving frescoes gathered by the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid and published by Goce Angeličin Žura. I sought to contribute to the study by offering line drawings of the originals based on the available material.

Apostles and Martyrs

The cycle of the Martyrdoms of the Apostles begins in the western part of the northern wall, which features ten scenes, and the remaining two are on the eastern wall. The compositions measure 100 × 80 cm and are separated by red borders.¹⁴ They contain martyrdoms or deaths of five unidentified apostles (scenes 1–4, 11), Paul, Peter, Andrew, Simon the Zealot, Philip, Bartholomew, and Thomas. In the following discussion, I will adhere to a sequential order of the paintings, excluding the remnants of scenes 2 and 3, which I will revisit in the final part of the discussion.

The Identity of the Apostle in the First Scene

Of the first scene, only the lower half has survived—a middle-aged apostle and two or possibly three figures visible only up to their shoulders, laying his body onto the sarcophagus (Fig. 6). The apostle lies on a bier, dressed in a chiton and himation, with his arms crossed on his chest, and under his head, there is a pillow.¹⁵ He has a sparse beard bifurcated into two short strands, and his hair is visible only on the forehead, nape of the neck, and on the sides. In my opinion, the iconographic features of the unidentified apostle in Ohrid unambiguously suggest that he is the apostle and evangelist Luke.¹⁶ A short, sparse beard, often bifurcated in the middle,

characterizes the standard representation of St. Luke, who was, starting from the twelfth century, increasingly marked with a tonsure. The scene of laying the body into a sarcophagus, i.e., burial, is one of the iconographic forms in which St. Luke can appear. It seems that the iconographic model that combines the laying into a tomb and the burial of St. Luke have been established in the *Menologion of Basil II* (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 1613, ca. 1000, or in the first decades of the eleventh century).¹⁷ In fact, it visualizes the most important event in the legend of St. Luke: the solemn translation of the saint's relics to Constantinople and their burial in the church of the Holy Apostles, which took place in 357 under Constantius II.¹⁸ The five-dome, cruciform church of the Holy Apostles in the background of the miniature for 18 October in the *Menologion of Basil II* indicates where the event took place.¹⁹ In addition to some compositional and iconographic similarities between the Ohrid and Constantinopolitan examples, a noteworthy feature is the appearance of the sarcophagus, which in both cases has a series of blind arcades on the sides. Depending on the available space and the employed iconographic models, calendar illustrations in later painted menologia are sometimes reduced to the sarcophagus (hexaptych at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, late eleventh century, Fig. 7),²⁰ others hint at the burial in the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1, fol. 13v, mid-fourteenth century),²¹ and some show a fully developed scene, including the city fortifications (Dečani, completed by 1347/1348).²² Menologion illustrations that include the

17 El "Menologio" de Basilio II Emperador de Bizancio (Vat. gr. 1613), facs. ed. (Vatican City, 2005), fol. 121.

18 R. A. Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden*, 2 vols. (Braunschweig, 1883–1884), 2.2:354–71, esp. 361–62; and *Synaxarium CP* 147–48. For a discussion of the date of the translation of St. Luke's relics to the church of the Holy Apostles, see D. Woods, "The Date of the Translation of the Relics of SS. Luke and Andrew to Constantinople," *VChr* 45.3 (1991): 286–92, including earlier bibliography.

19 El "Menologio" de Basilio II, fol. 121.

20 G. Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexaptych of the Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai* (Venice, 2009), 57, pl. 4.

21 I. Hutter, *El Menologio de Oxford* (ms. Gr. th. f. 1, Bodleian Library, Oxford): *Libro de studios* (Madrid, 2007), 74, 176.

22 S. Kesić-Ristić and D. Vojvodić, "Menolog," in *Zidno slikarstvo manastira Dečana: Grada i studije*, ed. V. J. Đurić (Belgrade, 1995), 377–434, at 383.

14 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 99.

15 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 99.

16 Miljković Pepek identifies the apostle as James, son of Alphaeus (James the Minor) or St. Stephen the Protomartyr. For arguments in favor of these identifications, see Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 99. See also Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 17; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 48.

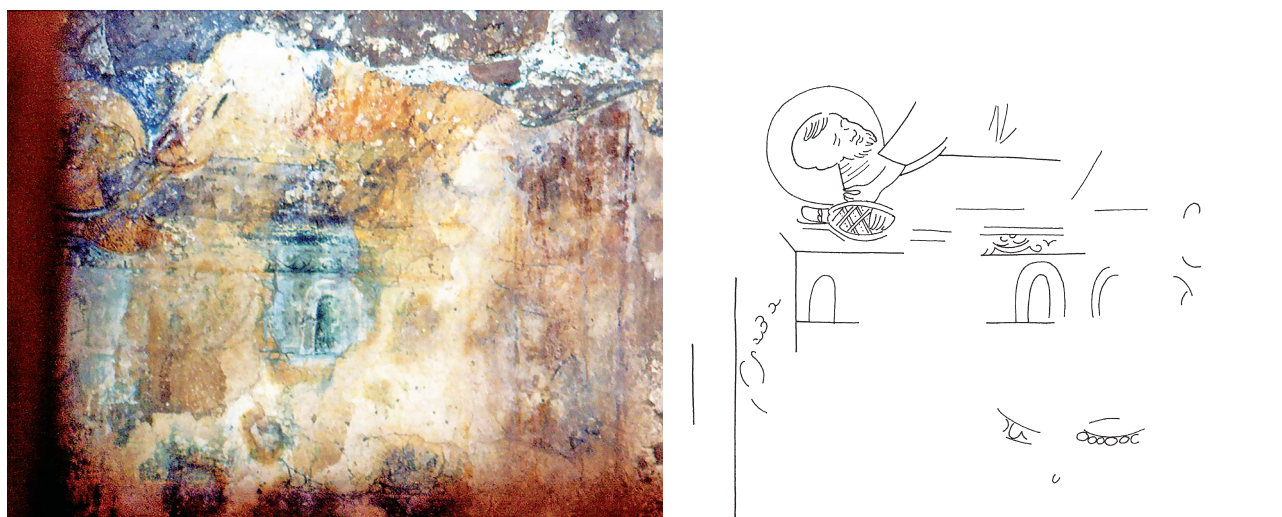


Fig. 6. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēision above the diaconicon, unidentified scene (burial of St. Luke the Evangelist). Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.



Fig. 7. St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, hexptych: a calendar panel showing the martyrs of October; detail: burial of St. Luke the Evangelist (second image in the row). Photo courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai, Visual Resources Collections, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan.

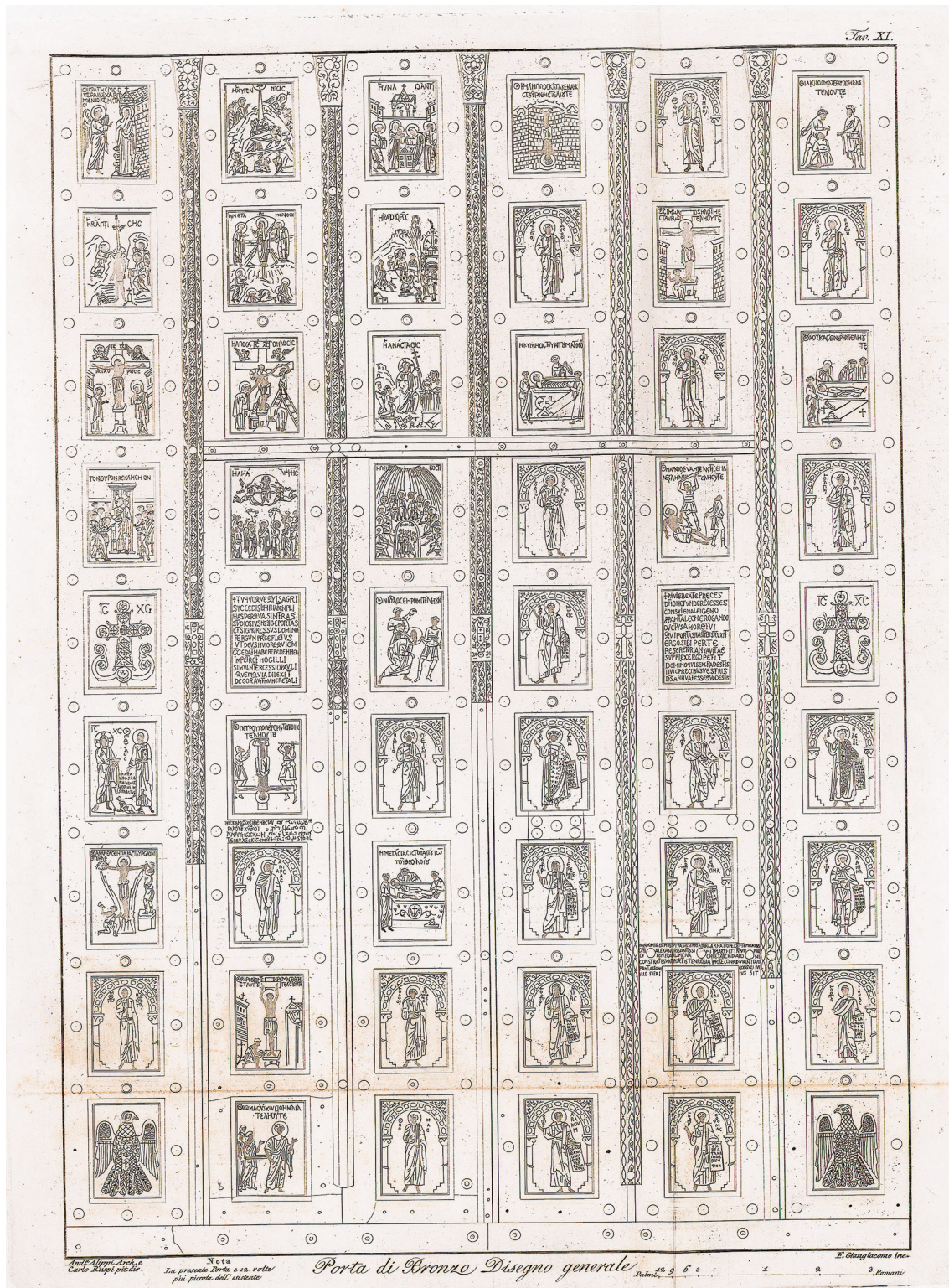


Fig. 8. San Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome, bronze doors. After N. M. Nicolai, *Della Basilica di S. Paolo: Opera di Niccola Maria Nicolai romano, votante della segnatura di grazia con piante, e disegni incisi* (Rome, 1815), pl. XI; courtesy of the Archivio storico dell'Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome.

scene of Luke's burial clearly provided the framework for the iconographic shaping of this evangelist's death in the cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles, at least those created in Constantinople. The twelve martyrdoms and deaths of the apostles shown on the bronze doors adorning the main entrance of San Paolo fuori le Mura (St. Paul Outside the Walls) in Rome (1070) include the burial of St. Luke (Fig. 8, sixth image in the third row).²³ The inscription repeats the formulae commonly found in Greek menologia: Ὁ ἄγ(ιος) Λουκ(ας) ἐν εἰρή(νῃ) τε(λειοῦται).²⁴ The cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles is part of the elaborate decorative program of the San Paolo doors, made, according to the donor inscription, in Constantinople in 1070,²⁵ on the commission of Pantaleone, member of a wealthy and renowned family from the city of Amalfi in southern Italy, whose diplomatic ties with the imperial palace in Constantinople and estates in the Byzantine capital are attested in many sources.²⁶ Fifty-four bronze plates decorated in a combination of the niello technique and inlaid silver feature a visual program with narrative scenes and figures: twelve Great Feasts, twelve prophets, twelve apostles, and martyrdoms of the twelve apostles. The opulent gift he donated for the salvation of his soul to the church of San Paolo fuori le Mura highlights the themes of the history of salvation—from its foreshadowing in the visions of the Old Testament prophets to the most important events in Christ's life and the

establishment of the church.²⁷ Byzantine in nature, in the historical context of the Great Schism of 1054, this prestigious work of art was understood as a combination of the traditions of Byzantine art and the programmatic conception of the Roman Church.²⁸ The cycle of the apostles' martyrdoms is considered a distinctly Byzantine feature as this iconographic theme was previously unknown beyond Constantinople.²⁹

Two main points may be drawn from the discussion presented here: (1) the iconography of the burial of St. Luke was created around the year 1000 and designed for the *Menologion of Basil II*, but this tradition continued, parallel with other types of St. Luke's death, throughout the Byzantine period; and (2) the first scene of the Ohrid apostolic cycle bears a strong overall resemblance with the iconographic schemes applied in the miniature for 18 October in the *Menologion of Basil II* and the scene of the burial of St. Luke on the San Paolo doors.

The Identity of the Apostle in the Fourth Scene

The fourth scene of an apostle's death in the cycle in the pareklēsis above the diaconicon at Hagia Sophia in Ohrid also requires identification (Fig. 9).³⁰ It largely repeats the iconographic scheme of the first scene. However, one figure, rendered in profile, holds a censor in its right hand. That makes it easy enough to infer that the scene, besides the act of laying the body into a sarcophagus, also included the burial of the apostle. Dressed in a chiton and himation, the apostle lies on a shroud with his arms crossed on his chest. The fragments of the apostle's face match the iconography of Matthew,

23 N. M. Nicolai, *Della Basilica di S. Paolo: Opera di Niccolò Maria Nicolai romano, votante della segnatura di grazia con piante, e disegni incisi* (Rome, 1815), pl. XVII; M. E. Frazer, "Church Doors and the Gates of Paradise: Byzantine Bronze Doors in Italy," *DOP* 27 (1973): 145–62, at 155, n. 42, fig. 17; and L. Bevilacqua, "Roma e Bisanzio nell'XI secolo: La porta bronzea di S. Paolo fuori le Mura" (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza," 2002), 65–71, fig. 70.

24 Nicolai points this out: *Della Basilica*, 295. Cf. the inscription on the Sinai menologion icon: Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexaptych*, 57.

25 Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pls. XI–XVII; E. Josi, V. Federici, and E. Ercadi, *La porta bizantina di S. Paolo* (Rome, 1967); Frazer, "Church Doors," 155, n. 42, fig. 17; and Bevilacqua, "Roma e Bisanzio," with further bibliography.

26 On Pantaleone, his ties to Byzantium, and the content of the donor inscription and composition, see N. Ristovska, "Medieval Byzantium in the Context of Artistic Interchange between East and West: The Illuminating Example of the Inlaid Brass Door at Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome," in *Discipuli dona ferentes: Glimpses of Byzantium in Honour of Marlia Mundell Mango*, ed. T. Papacostas and M. Parani (Turnhout, 2017), 363–445, at 374–77, figs. 3, 4a–b, 5, app. nos. 1–3.

27 Damaged in a fire in 1832, the door was restored in 1965–1966, but the present-day arrangement does not match the original. See the discussion in Bevilacqua, "Roma e Bisanzio," 96–114; and L. Bevilacqua, "La porta bizantina di S. Paolo fuori le Mura: Fonti, documenti e testimonianze grafiche (XVI–XIX secolo)," *Nuovi annali della scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari* 19 (2005): 185–205.

28 V. Pace, "L'arte di Bisanzio al servizio della chiesa di Roma: La porta di bronzo di San Paolo fuori le Mura," in *Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. B. Borkopp, B. Schellewald, and L. Theis (Amsterdam, 1995), 111–19; and L. Bevilacqua, "Il programma iconografico della porta di S. Paolo fuori le Mura," in *Le porte del Paradiso: Arte e tecnologia bizantina tra Italia e Mediterraneo*, ed. A. Iacobini (Rome, 2009), 239–59.

29 Pace, "L'arte di Bisanzio," 115.

30 Only a few letters in the last two lines of the inscription have survived: KA <...> | IKAN <...> NO; see Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 100, fig. 7.



Fig. 9. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēsion above the diaconicon, unidentified scene (burial of St. Matthew the Evangelist). Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

usually shown as an aging man with graying hair and a mid-length beard.³¹ One specific iconographic feature appears as an element of the rich architectural setting of the scene: licks of flame seem to rise above the city wall.

The iconography of the scene, and even in the details, follows the apocryphal tradition of Matthew's martyrdom.³² One of the most popular and frequently illustrated legends describes his martyrdom in a land inhabited by cannibals, in a city called Myrmēna. According to this apocryphal vita, the prince of that

city, Fluvian, decided to burn the apostle and brought him to his palace, but he emerged unharmed from the flames. Then the prince called for more wood, doused Matthew in tar, and ordered twelve gold idols to be brought and called on them to turn the apostle into ashes. But the apostle prayed to the Lord in the fire, and the flame turned to the golden idols and the prince, and Matthew surrendered his soul to God. The prince laid his body into an iron casket and threw it into the sea, but after the miraculous recovery of the apostle's unmarred relics, he started to believe in Christ and buried the apostle in a gold casket.³³ Besides the central

31 Offering no explanation, Angeličin Žura notes that Matthew and Bartholomew could have been depicted in this way (*Živopisot vo kapelata*, 17, figs. 9, 10; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 48).

32 For the apocryphal tradition of Matthew's martyrdom, see Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:109–41.

33 For the Greek apocryphal text, see C. Tischendorf, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1851), 167–89; Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:109–13; and M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and*



Fig. 10.
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, gr. 510,
fol. 32v, martyrdom of the apostles. First row:
Peter, Paul, and Andrew; second row: James,
son of Zebedee, Mark, and Matthew; third
row: John, Jude Thaddeus, and Simon the
Zealot; fourth row: Philip, Bartholomew, and
Thomas. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque
nationale de France.

event of laying the body into a sarcophagus with the burial, the iconographic element of flame strikingly points to the hagiographic origin of the Ohrid image. Fire is represented by somewhat stylized flames, to fit the available space above the palace wall.³⁴

The closest parallel for this Ohrid scene can be found among calendar illustrations for 16 November, the feast day of the evangelist Matthew. Miniature from the *Menologion of Basil II* has a very similar compositional scheme, uniting the laying of the body into a grave

and the burial in front of the architectural coulisses.³⁵ In later menologia is found a simpler scene, that showing the apostle burning in flames.³⁶ As for cycles of apostolic martyrdoms in Byzantine art, the scene of laying Matthew's body into a sarcophagus appears already in an illuminated manuscript of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, produced in Constantinople for the emperor Basil I between 879 and 882 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France [BnF], gr. 510, fol. 32v, Fig. 10).³⁷ The

Apocalypses, with Other Narratives and Fragments (Oxford, 1975), 460–62.

³⁴ The same tendency of Byzantine painters toward stylized flames is encountered, for instance, in the miniatures of *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fols. 4, 37, 51, 112, 144, 207, 246, 251, 255, 267.

³⁵ *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fol. 186.

³⁶ See, e.g., the Sinai hexaptych and Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1, fol. 17r: Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexaptych*, 64, fig. 5b; and Hutter, *El Menologio de Oxford*, 78, fol. 17r.

³⁷ H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale du VI^e au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1929), 10–11, 14–15, pl. XXII; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 245–57, esp. 251, fig. 8.

full-page miniature is organized as a grid of four by three squares, each with the martyrdom or burial of an apostle.³⁸ To the same iconographic tradition belong also the San Paolo doors. One of the twelve plates with the martyrdoms of the apostles shows the burial of St. Matthew (see above, Fig. 8, fourth image in the third row).³⁹ It bears noting that other cycles depicting the martyrdom of the apostles, which are chronologically relatively close to the Ohrid example, depict a narrative version of the Latin *passio* or a Greek apocryphal account. According to the former, Matthew was killed by a sword on the altar of a church in Ethiopia (San Marco, Venice, late twelfth/early thirteenth century),⁴⁰ while in the latter, he was stoned⁴¹ (menaion for March–August, Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91v, late twelfth century).⁴²

It is clear from the above that Matthew's burial was a choice for a small number of hagiographical illustrations. Further, in comparison with its closest parallels—BnF, gr. 510, the *Menologion of Basil II*, and the San Paolo doors—the fresco from Hagia Sophia at Ohrid bears traces of originality; the licks of flame integrated into the burial composition have no analogies.

38 The miniature is inserted in the disturbed fourth quire. For a discussion of the possible original place of folio 32v, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 247, 427, app. C.

39 Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XVI. See also Bevilacqua, "Roma e Bisanzio," 70–71.

40 O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1984), 1.1:224, 2.2:fig. 360, with examples from Western iconography.

41 According to the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* for this feast day, Matthew was stoned to death: *Synaxarium CP* 781. See also T. Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae: Indices apostolorum discipulorumque Domini Dorotheo, Epiphanio, Hippolyto aliisque vindicata* (Leipzig, 1907), 185, 187.

42 The cycle of the Martyrdoms of the Twelve is shown in the menologion illustration for 30 June synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles: see A. Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion des Komnenenzeitalters," *OC* 3.1 (1927): 67–79, at 71–73; P. Mijović, *Menolog: Istorijsko-umetnička istraživanja* (Belgrade, 1973), 203, n. 170; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, fig. 109. The link with Constantinople is apparent in the high artistic value of the manuscript from the Lavra of St. Sabbas near Jerusalem. Based on its iconographic, stylistic, and codicological characteristics, it belongs to late twelfth-century art, and is hence dated to the period before the Latin conquest of Constantinople. See A. W. Carr, *Byzantine Illumination, 1150–1250: The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago, 1987), 77–78, nos. 51, 7D3, 7D4, with further bibliography.

The Martyrdoms of Paul and Peter

A comparative approach provided a framework for identifying the content of the first two scenes, while for the next group of scenes, the same approach will contextualize them within the common production milieu.

The fifth composition, heavily damaged in the upper part of the fresco, shows the beheading of Paul (ΦΟ <...>|ΚΟΙ <...>|ΠΑΥΛ <ΟC> ...|ΕΠΙΕΙ <...>|, Fig. 11).⁴³ The artist chose to depict the moment of decapitation by placing the severed head of the apostle, with the eyes closed, well above the ground (Fig. 12). This solution was not found in other comparable examples. A part of the leg is all that is left of his executioner. The sixth scene, damaged in the upper parts, shows Peter's reversed crucifixion (ΧΟΝ <...> Ν, Figs. 13, 14).⁴⁴ Both scenes are set within an architectural framework composed of slender buildings, walls, and a tower, which suggests that the events took place in Rome. They were created within the long-established iconographic tradition of depicting Peter's and Paul's martyrdoms. One aspect, however, deserves a comment in comparative terms: the pictorial language employed to visualize the hagiographical sources. According to the apocryphal story, the crucifixion of Peter and the beheading of Paul are traditionally believed to have happened in Rome, during the reign of Emperor Nero.⁴⁵ These historical elements from the apocryphal texts are made visually clear in comparable examples—the earliest preserved menologia of the Constantinopolitan liturgical tradition (29 June),⁴⁶ where Nero sits on a throne and Paul addresses a woman offering her headdress (Moscow, State Historical Museum, gr. 9 [Vlad. 389], fol. 57r, 1063),⁴⁷ while the architectural setting in the slightly

43 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 100, drawing I.5, figs. 2, 8; Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 17, figs. 11, 12; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 48, fig. 4.

44 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 100–101, drawing I.6, figs. 5, 6; Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 17, figs. 13, 14; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 48.

45 T. Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden: Nebst Jüngerkalogen des Dorotheus und verwandter Texte* (Leipzig, 1907), 240–47 (Peter), 290–92 (Paul); and W. Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, *Writings Relating to the Apostles: Apocalypses and Related Subjects* (Philadelphia, 1965), 319 (Peter), 386 (Paul).

46 *Synaxarium CP* 777–80.

47 Menologion for May–August: N. P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago, 1990), 61–72, esp.

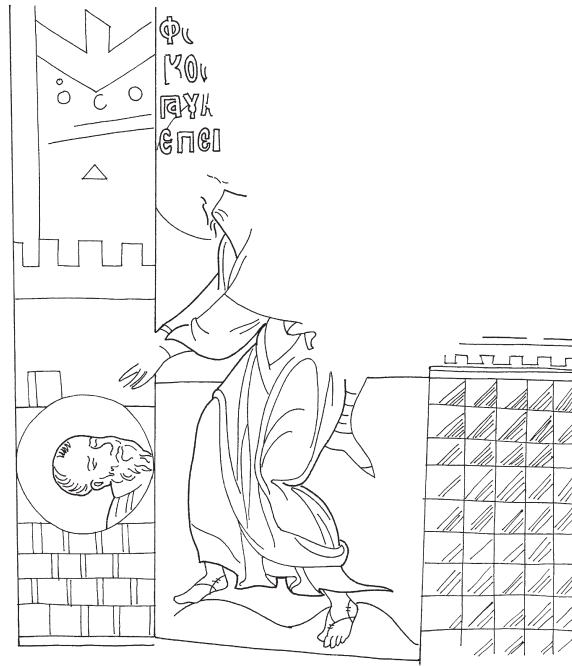


Fig. 11. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, parekklēšion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Paul. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.



Fig. 12. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, parekklēšion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Paul, detail. Photo courtesy of the Legacy of Dušan and Ružica Tasić, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade.

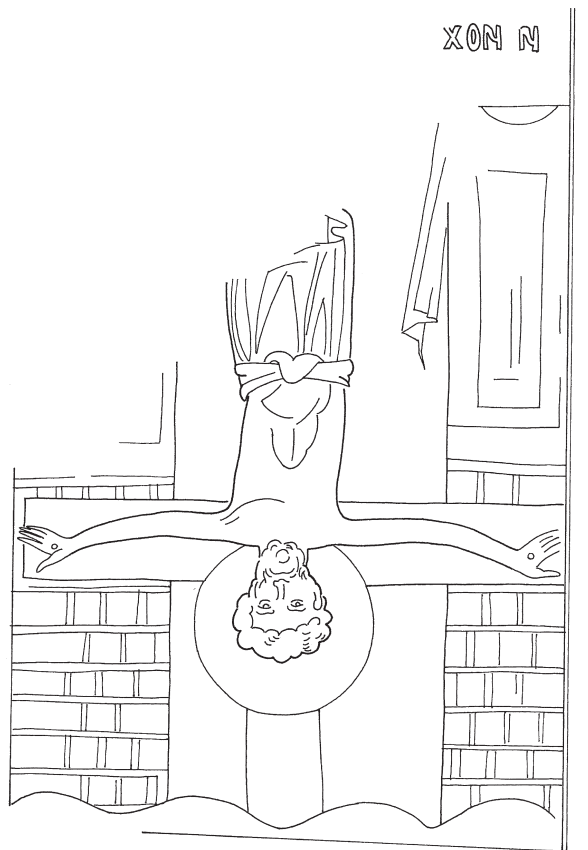


Fig. 13. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēsion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Peter. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.



Fig. 14. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēsion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Peter, detail. Photo courtesy of the Legacy of Dušan and Ružica Tasić, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade.



Fig. 15.
Paris, Bibliothèque
nationale de France,
gr. 1528, fol. 62v, the
crucifixion of Peter
and the beheading of
Paul. Photo courtesy
of the Bibliothèque
nationale de France.

younger illustrated Metaphrastian menologion of Constantinopolitan provenance very elaborately identifies the fortified city of Rome (BnF, gr. 1528, 62v, twelfth century, Fig. 15).⁴⁸ Based on the later menologion illustrations (Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208,

67–68; and N. P. Ševčenko, “An Eleventh Century Illustrated Edition of the Metaphrastian Menologium,” *East European Quarterly* 13.4 (1979): 423–30. For a reproduction of the miniature, see O. S. Popova, A. V. Zakharova, and I. A. Orešskaia, *Vizantiiskaia miniatiura vtoroi poloviny X – nachala XII veka* (Moscow, 2012), fig. 290.

48 Mijović, *Menolog*, 197–98, 213; and Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts*, 140.

fol. 87v),⁴⁹ it seems evident that the depictions of the martyrdoms of these two apostles are united in a more condensed and reduced form. The shared feast day in the church calendar contributed to their placement next to each other in the earliest depictions of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul within apostolic cycles. Depending on the pictorial media and the conception of the cycle, they incorporate the historical elements of the legends of their deaths in a condensed (BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v

49 Baumstark, “Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion,” 71, fig. 2; and Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, nos. 51, 7D4.

[see above, Fig. 10];⁵⁰ chapel Balkan deresi 4, close to Ortahisar, Cappadocia, tenth century;⁵¹ San Paolo doors [see above, Fig. 8], third image in the fifth row, second image in the sixth row)⁵² or narrative version (Belli killise 1, Soğanlı, Cappadocia, tenth century).⁵³ As this overview shows, there were many variations within the basic iconographic scheme of Peter's and Paul's martyrdoms. One of those examples is the Ohrid fresco of the beheading of Paul, which appears to be the only one featuring the severed head of the apostle. However, this variant, as part of the repertoire designed for martyrdom images, is commonly found in calendar illustrations.⁵⁴ This serves as evidence for parallel development and, more broadly, iconographic interchange between cycles of the Martyrdoms of the Apostles and menologia during the Middle Byzantine period. The Ohrid martyrdoms are characterized by a consistent use of architectural backdrops, which, as well as in BnF, gr. 510, and BnF, gr. 1528, serves to complete the visual interpretation of the apocryphal accounts. A closer iconographic and thematic analogy for the frescoes of Hagia Sophia at Ohrid could be the more numerous figural compositions on the bronze doors of the Roman church of San Paolo fuori le Mura.

50 Omont, *Miniatures*, 14, pl. XXII.1; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 247–48, fig. 8.

51 This pictorial program includes only the martyrdoms of Paul and Peter. See G. de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (Paris, 1936), 53–56; Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*, 82; and C. Jolivet-Lévy, *La Cappadoce: Un siècle après G. de Jerphanion*, 2 vols. (Paris, 2015), 1:174–77; 2:pls. 175.2–177.

52 In view of the dedication of the church and the donor composition of the merchant Pantaleone with St. Paul, there is little reason to doubt that the appearance recorded in the nineteenth century matches the original arrangement of the two scenes, which means that the first was the martyrdom of Paul, followed by the death of Peter. See S. d'Agincourt and J. B. L. Georges, *Histoire de l'art par les monuments, depuis sa décadence au IV^e siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVI^e*, vol. 4, *Planches: Architecture et sculpture* (Paris, 1823), pl. 15.

53 The deaths of Peter and Paul appear in a group of scenes showing the martyrdoms and acts of the apostles. See de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres*, 285; M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor*, 3 vols. (Greenwich, CT, 1967), 1:30, 161–62, no. XLVII, 3:no. XLVII, figs. 444–55; Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*, 82; C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), 263, pl. 147; and Jolivet-Lévy, *La Cappadoce*, 1:260–62, 2:pls. 244.2, 245.4.

54 See, e.g., N. P. Ševčenko, "Synaxaria and Menologia," in *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, ed. V. Tsamakda (Leiden, 2017), 319–27, at 320.

The Martyrdom of Andrew

The seventh composition shows the apostle Andrew crucified on a tree that symmetrically furcates into two central and two smaller trunks on each side [$\kappa < . . . > \alpha < . . . > \omega \varsigma$ | Ανδραί(ας)]. His arms and legs are tied with ropes to the tops and bottom of the branched-out tree (Fig. 16).⁵⁵ This was one of the two ways of depicting St. Andrew's death, the other being crucifixion.⁵⁶ The relationship between these two iconographic types is unclear and requires further explanation. Both draw on different yet intertwined apocryphal texts.⁵⁷ The principal source of the crucifixion of St. Andrew on a Y-shaped tree is to be found in a small group of Greek apocrypha. The account of the apostle's death recorded in these writings contributed to the formation and spread of the first iconographic type of the martyrdom of St. Andrew, exemplified by the scene from Ohrid.⁵⁸ Pseudo-Hippolytus's *List of the Seventy Apostles of Christ*, traditionally attributed to Hippolytus of Rome from the

55 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 101, fig. 6. For different identification of the seventh scene, see Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 17, figs. 15, 16; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 48, fig. 6.

56 Notable examples include Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1, fol. 19r; Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91r; BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v; Belli killise 1, Soğanlı, Cappadocia; *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fol. 215; Hutter, *El Menologio de Oxford*, 81; Baumstark, "Ein illustrieres griechisches Menaion," 71–72; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 248, 251, fig. 8; and de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres*, 286, pl. 183, no. 4.

57 The most widespread group of sources reports that this apostle was martyred by crucifixion under the proconsul Aegeates in the city of Patras in Achaea and that his arms and legs were tied instead of nailed to the cross to prolong his torture. See Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 1:583–601; Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden*, 247–53; Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 420–22; and James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 360–63. A considerable number of representations of St. Andrew's crucifixion in Byzantine menologia and martyrdoms of the apostles follows this textual tradition. See above, n. 56.

58 The crucifixion of St. Andrew on a Y-shaped tree is considered in scholarship as an unusual and uncommon iconographic variant, whose textual source can only be found in the Latin tradition. See M. Gligoričević-Maksimović, "Ciklus dela apostolskih u vizantijskom slikarstvu" (PhD diss., University of Belgrade, 2007), 27; and M. Popović, "Predstave stradanja i smrti apostola u priprati katolikona manastira," *Niš i Vizantija* 11 (2013): 309–28, at 312. The iconography, however, does not lend support to this opinion. For Latin sources, see *DACL* 1:2, 2032. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 251, notes that descriptions of Andrew being nailed to a tree also appear in some Greek apocrypha.

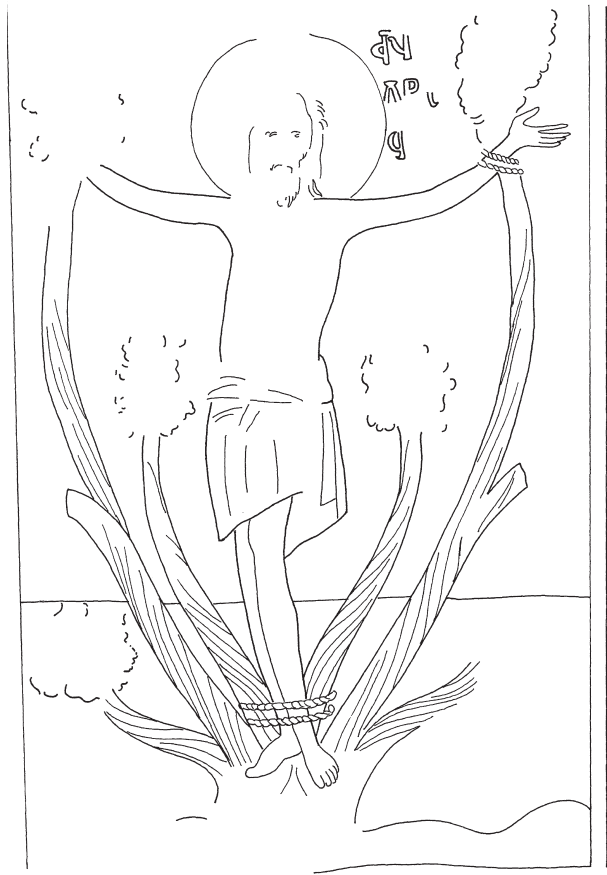


Fig. 16. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēsion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Andrew. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

third century, reports that the apostle Andrew died in Patras in Achaea, where he was crucified, in an upright position, on an olive tree (Ἀνδρέας Σκύθαις, Θράκαις κηρύξας ἐσθαυρώθη ἐν Πάτραις τῆς Ἀχαιῆς ἐπὶ ἐλαίας ὀρθίος καὶ θάπτεται ἐκεῖ).⁵⁹ Pseudo-Hippolytus's apostolic dossier appears in the Greek manuscript tradition in the tenth century and has reached us in many copies.⁶⁰ The

second relevant source is Greek synaxarion, more specifically, the content of the entry for 30 June (Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles) in the eighteenth-century edition of the *Menologion of Basil II* by Cardinal Annibale Albani, which reports that the third apostle, Andrew the First-Called, was crucified on a tree in the time of Aegeates (Τρίτος Ἀνδρέας ὁ πρωτόκλητος ὁ ὑπ' Αἰγεάτου ἐν δένδρῳ σθαυρωθείς).⁶¹ According to the data from the sources, these images have as their focus the distinctive

59 Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 164. See also A. Vinogradov and A. Grishchenko, *Andrej Pervozvannyi: Opyt nebiograficheskogo zhizneopisaniia* (Moscow, 2013), 402.

60 See Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 163–70; A. Vinogradov, “Apostol'skie spiski – ‘zabytaia’ straniitsa khristianskoi literatury,” *Bogoslovskie trudy* 40 (2005): 128–38, at 136; and S. F. Johnson, “Apostolic Patterns of Thought, from Early Christianity to Early Byzantium,” in *The Holy Apostles: A Lost Monument, a*

Forgotten Project, and the Presentness of the Past, ed. M. Mullett and R. G. Ousterhout (Washington, DC, 2020), 53–66, at 61–63, with older bibliography.

61 PG 117, 516; and Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 184–85. See also *Synaxarium CPL*.



Fig. 17. St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, hexptych: a calendar panel showing the martyrs of November; detail: martyrdom of the apostle Andrew (last image in the row). Photo courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai, Visual Resources Collections, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan.

shape of the tree. We should mention calendar illustrations for 30 November, the feast day of St. Andrew⁶² (icon-hexptych from St. Catherine's Monastery, Fig. 17;⁶³ Dečani)⁶⁴ and cycles of apostolic martyrdoms (San Paolo doors⁶⁵ [see above, Fig. 8], first image in the seventh row; St. Peter's church, Megali Kastania, Mani Peninsula, second half of the thirteenth century).⁶⁶ The discussed visual material and written sources confirm that the Ohrid fresco exemplifies one of two apparently equally widespread iconographic paths in the Byzantine tradition of depicting the death of the apostle Andrew. Iconographic comparisons suggest that the most compelling parallels for the Ohrid fresco belong to late eleventh-century Byzantine art—above all, the Sinai menologion icon and the image on the door of the church of San Paolo fuori le Mura.

62 *Synaxarium CP* 265–68.

63 Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexptych*, 68, pl. 5.

64 Mijović, *Menolog*, 327, fig. 208; and Kesić-Ristić and Vojvodić, "Menolog," 389.

65 Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XII.

66 The cycle contains a selection of martyrological scenes, mostly apostolic, with calendar markings. See S. Koukiales, *Μηνολόγια και Μαρτυρολόγια στην μνημειακή ζωγραφική του ελληνικού χώρου* (Thessaloniki, 2019), 299, fig. on 299. See also Table 3.

The Martyrdom of Simon the Zealot

The eighth scene shows the death of Simon Kananites (Mark 3:18; Matthew 10:4) or the Zealot (Luke 6:15; Acts of the Apostles 1:13) (<...> Σίμων <...>, Fig. 18).⁶⁷ Choosing not to alter the basic composition, coloring, and mise-en-scène of the previous scenes, the painter positioned the crucified apostle as the central figure between two buildings. The death of Simon is iconographically consistent with the most widespread Greek apocryphal legends, which recount that, having received the Holy Ghost on the day of the Pentecost, the apostle traveled through Mauritania, Egypt, Africa, and even Britain, preaching the gospel. He met his end in Britain or, alternatively, in Ostracine, Egypt, where he was crucified by barbarians during Trajan's reign.⁶⁸ The illustrated manuscript with the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v [see above, Fig. 10]) shows that by the end of the ninth

67 Miljković Peppek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 101, fig. 3; Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 18, fig. 17, drawing 18; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 49.

68 Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:142–51; and Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden*, 208–82.

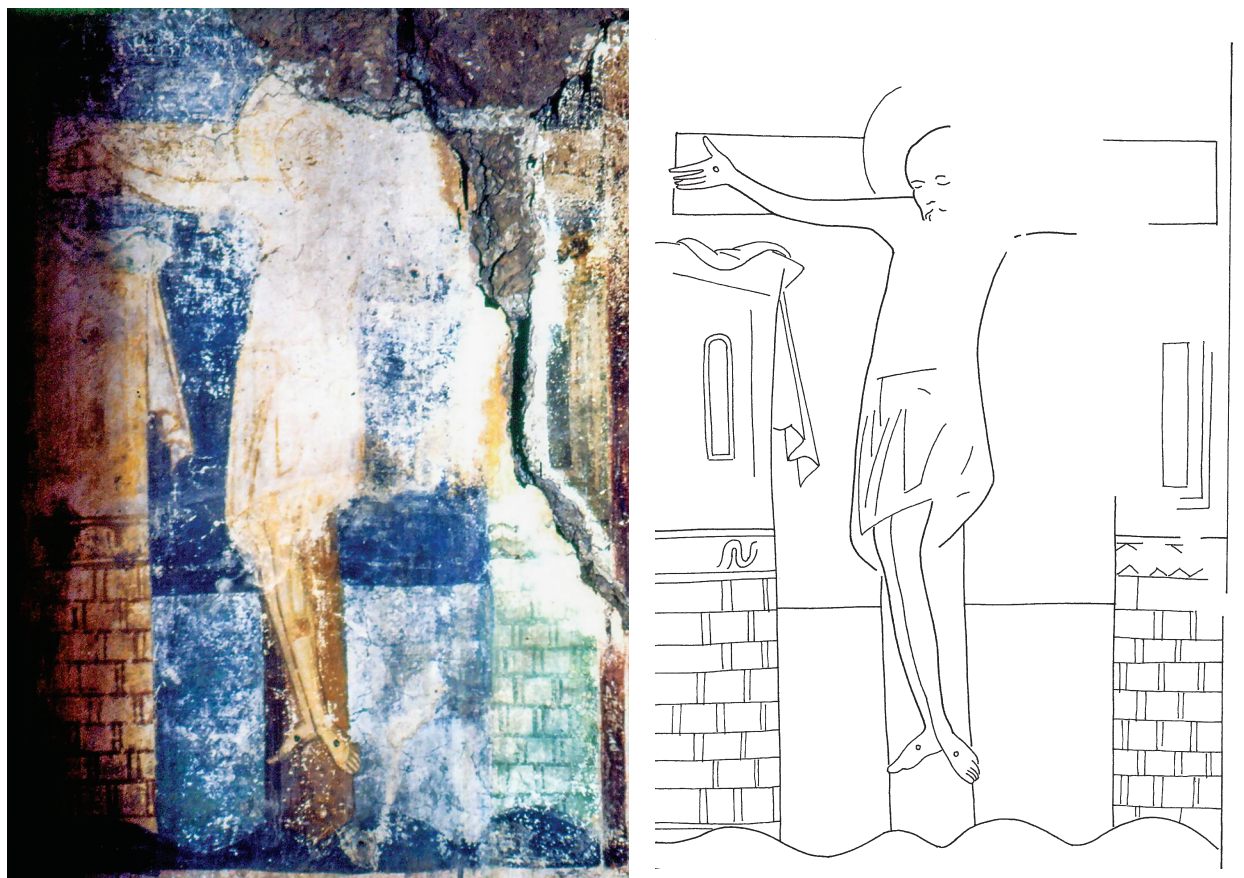


Fig. 18. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, parekklēšion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Simon the Zealot. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.



Fig. 19. St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, hexaptych: a calendar panel showing the martyrs of May; detail: crucifixion of the apostle Simon the Zealot (third image in the row). Photo courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai, Visual Resources Collections, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan.

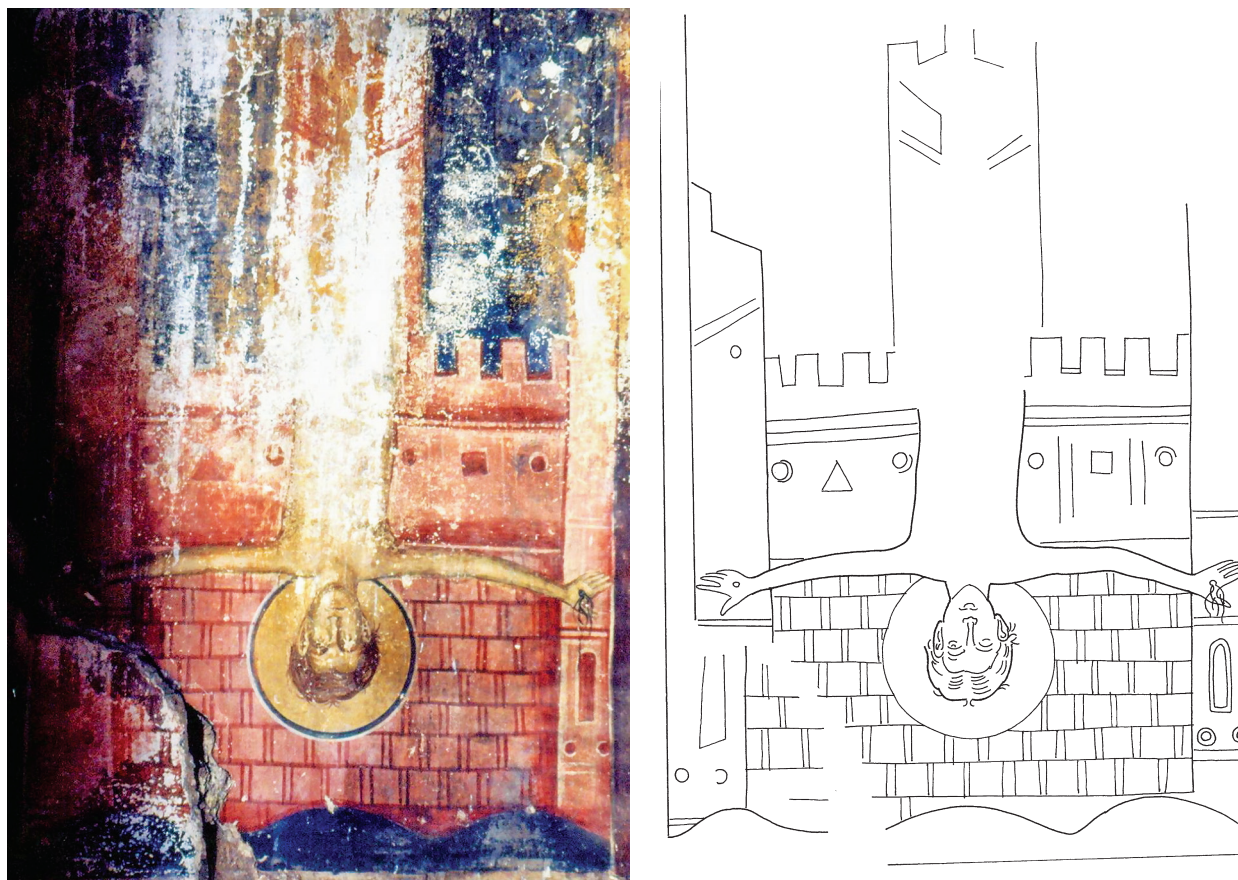


Fig. 20. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēision above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Philip. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

century, the Byzantine iconography of the martyrdom of Simon the Zealot was established.⁶⁹ Only from the eleventh century onward do we have quite a standardized type of image in menologion illustration for 10 May, the feast day of Simon the Zealot⁷⁰ (the Sinai icon-hexptych, Fig. 19)⁷¹ and cycles of apostolic martyrdoms (San Paolo doors [see above, Fig. 8], fifth image in the second row).⁷² We can further trace the iconographic constancy of the depictions of Simon the Zealot's martyrdom in the late twelfth-century menaia

(Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91v).⁷³ There are striking similarities, however, between the Ohrid fresco, the Sinai icon, and the San Paolo doors. Although represented in three different visual media—metalwork, miniature, and monumental painting—all three examples share content, iconography, and overall design.

The Martyrdom of Philip

The ninth scene on the northern wall contains the death of the apostle Philip (Fig. 20). This order of the scenes rests on the last chapter of Philip's apocryphal

69 Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 252, fig. 8.

70 *Synaxarium CP* 671.

71 Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexptych*, 103, fig. 11.

72 Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XV.

73 The crucifixion of Simon is set in a craggy landscape. See Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion," 71–72. For a reproduction, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, fig. 109.



Fig. 21.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
parekklēision above the
diaconicon, martyrdom
of the apostle Philip.
Photo courtesy of the
Legacy of Dušan and
Ružica Tasić, Faculty of
Philosophy, University
of Belgrade.

vita, which reports that, during Trajan's reign, this apostle, after the death of Simon the Zealot, went to Asia on a preaching mission. In the city of Hierapolis, where he was joined by his sister Mariamne and St. Bartholomew, he healed and converted many people and was consequently accused of practicing magic; his ankles and legs were slashed, and he was crucified upside down.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:7–11; Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden*, 268–69; and James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 448–51.

On the Ohrid fresco, a young, beardless apostle hangs upside down in front of pale-red city walls, with his legs nailed to two slender structures and his arms to the central tower (Fig. 21).⁷⁵ The iconographic formulae and features of composition that the painters of the Ohrid parekklēision relied on were developed in earlier

⁷⁵ Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 101–2, figs. 3, 4, notes a few letters that are now difficult to make out: $\text{C}\Gamma\Phi\text{IE} <\dots> \Delta\Omega <\dots> \text{MOP}$. See also Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 18, fig. 19, drawing 20; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 49.



Fig. 22. St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, hexptych: a calendar panel showing the martyrs of November; detail: martyrdom of the apostle Philip (second image in the row). Photo courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai, Visual Resources Collections, Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan.

cycles (BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v [see above, Fig. 10])⁷⁶ and menologion illustrations. This connection is particularly conspicuous in the design of the miniature for 14 November, the feast day of the apostle Philip,⁷⁷ in the *Menologion of Basil II* (fol. 182).⁷⁸ Illustrations in so-called Metaphrastian menologia add the figures of the apostle Bartholomew and Mariamne, who were, according to the apocryphal vita, by Philip's side when he died (Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery, gr. 500, fol. 275v, ca. 1063;⁷⁹ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 859, fol. 1r, second half of the eleventh century),⁸⁰ while the illustration on the Sinai icon-hexptych is much simpler (Fig. 22).⁸¹ The iconography of Philip's torture and death on the San Paolo doors aligns with the solutions found in menologion illustrations (see above, Fig. 8, fourth image in the first row).⁸² However,

a notable departure from the usual concept is evident in Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 92r, where Philip is crucified on a wall in an upright position.⁸³ As far as iconography is concerned, the Ohrid fresco parallels the images on the Sinai menologion icon and San Paolo doors, particularly in terms of their structure and composition. All three examples employ an iconographically reduced solution, with the figure of the apostle before an architectural background. They are joined by the iconographically richer, earlier miniature from the *Menologion of Basil II*, which nonetheless has the same thematic and compositional core.

The Martyrdom of Bartholomew

The last scene on the northern wall shows the apostle Bartholomew martyred by crucifixion: ΒΑΡΘ <...> ΚΩΝΝΙΚΑ <...> ΤΑΘ (Fig. 23).⁸⁴ Once again, the order of the scenes reflects the sequence of events in the apocryphal writings about Philip and Bartholomew, whose stories were intertwined and linked.⁸⁵ In Greek

⁷⁶ Omont, *Miniatures*, 14–15, pl. XXII; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 255, fig. 8.

⁷⁷ *Synaxarium CP* 221–23.

⁷⁸ *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fol. 182.

⁷⁹ Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts*, 66, 2A1; and K. Weitzmann and G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, vol. 1, *From the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Princeton, NJ, 1990), 77, fig. 213.

⁸⁰ Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts*, 158, 4D6.

⁸¹ Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexptych*, 63, 156, fig. 5.

⁸² Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XVI.

⁸³ Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion," 71–72. For the reproduction, see Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, 7D3.

⁸⁴ Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 102, fig. 9; Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 18, fig. 21, drawing 22; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 49.

⁸⁵ Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:7–11, 54–57; Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden*, 268–71; and James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 448–51.

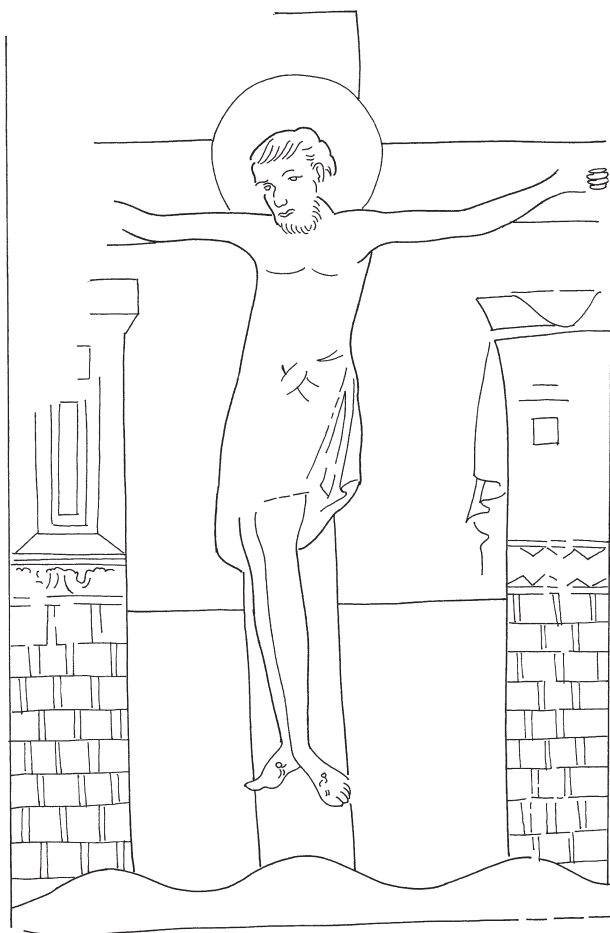


Fig. 23. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēsion above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Bartholomew. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

synaxaria and menologia for 11 June, the feast day of the apostle Bartholomew,⁸⁶ the most widespread version is the so-called Greater Armenian legend, which reports that this follower of Christ was crucified on a cross in Albanopolis (Urbanopolis).⁸⁷ At Ohrid, the location of the apostle's martyrdom is indicated by an urban backdrop that repeats the symmetrical arrangement, appearance, and coloring of the buildings in the scene of the martyrdom of Simon the Zealot. The extant depictions of Bartholomew's martyrdom in eleventh-century

illustrated menologia are admittedly few. A valuable piece of evidence about the visualization of the apostle's vita in this period is the calendar illustration on the Sinai icon-hexptych from St. Catherine's Monastery, which shows St. Bartholomew's crucifixion in the field for 11 June. From the existing evidence, our picture of the evolution of the iconography of Bartholomew's martyrdom is far from complete. Nevertheless, crucifixion was a feature of Bartholomew's iconography in apostolic martyrdom cycles (BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v, [see above, Fig. 10];⁸⁸ San Paolo doors [see above,

⁸⁶ *Synaxarium CP* 743–46.

⁸⁷ Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:57–62; and Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden*, 270–71.

⁸⁸ Omont, *Miniatures*, 14, pl. XXII.11; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 255, fig. 8.

Fig. 8], second image in the eighth row;⁸⁹ Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91v).⁹⁰ In addition, depictions of Bartholomew's death within different kinds of decoration, such as the miniature in the twelfth-century Gospel Lectionary (BnF, suppl. gr. 27, fol. 192)⁹¹ are consistent with the described scheme of representation. Judging by the apostle's facial features, body posture, and the integration of the architectural backdrop, the image in the Ohrid parekklēsiōn closely resembles the Sinai menologion icon and the relief on the San Paolo doors.

The Eleventh Scene and the Question of Its Identification

The eleventh scene is located on the eastern wall of the upper-story room. Identifying a remnant of the bowed figure in a gray-blue chiton, whose hands are tied in front of his body, a scene set in a craggy landscape, is quite challenging (Fig. 24).⁹² It seems plausible to base a discussion about the identity of the apostle on an iconographic comparison with the martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee (15 November, 30 April).⁹³ According to the earliest church tradition, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (12:2), James was killed in Jerusalem on Herod's orders.⁹⁴ More elaborate iconographic solutions follow the New Testament plot and include, besides the kneeling apostle and his torturer with a knife, Herod seated on a throne (BnF, gr. 510 [see above, Fig. 10]; Belli killise 1, Soğanlı; illustrated Acts of the Apostles [BnF, gr. 102, fol. 7v, eleventh century, Fig. 25]; San Paolo doors [see above, Fig. 8], sixth image in the first row),⁹⁵



Fig. 24. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, parekklēsiōn above the diaconicon, fragment of the unidentified scene (martyrdom of the apostle James, son of Zebedee?). Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

89 Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XIV.

90 Crucifixion of the apostle Bartholomew is set in a craggy landscape. See Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion," 72–73, 75–76; Mijović, *Menolog*, 203, n. 170; and Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, no. 51. The photograph is published in K. Weitzmann, "The Selection of Texts for Cyclic Illustration in Byzantine Manuscripts," in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, ed. C. Mango and I. Ševčenko (Washington, DC, 1975), 69–109, at 102, pl. 56; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, fig. 109.

91 Omont, *Miniatures*, 48, pl. C.9.

92 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 102. See also Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 18, fig. 23, drawing 2.4; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 49.

93 *Synaxarium CP* 225–26, 639–44.

94 Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:201–11.

95 Omont, *Miniatures*, 14, pl. XXII.4; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 251, fig. 8; de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres*, 2.1:285; H. L. Kessler,

while simplified compositions usually feature a craggy landscape in which an executioner looms over James's kneeling figure dressed in a chiton, stabbing him in the neck from behind (*Menologion of Basil II*, 15 November, fol. 185; Sinai hexaptych; Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91r; Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1, fol. 37v).⁹⁶ Considering the poor state of preservation

"Paris. Gr. 102: A Rare Illustrated Acts of the Apostles," *DOP* 27 (1973): 209–16, at 214, fig. 10; and Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XVII.

96 *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fol. 185; Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexaptych*, 101, pl. 10; Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion," 72; and Hutter, *El Menologio de Oxford*, 100.



Fig. 25.
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 102, fol. 7v, martyrdom of the apostle James, son of Zebedee (image on the left in the lower register). Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

of the Ohrid fresco, possible iconographic parallels are reduced to depictions of the apostle James, and hence it is important to note that there were several variants in his representations. Besides the most widespread type—a figure with its hands tied on the back, kneeling on the left leg—there are also cases where James holds his hands, tied or not, in front of his body (BnF, gr. 102, fol. 7v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1, fol. 37v). I propose that the Ohrid fresco might have

been a variation of this iconographic type.⁹⁷ In view of this conjecture, we should call attention to the fact that the martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee, was included in cycles of apostolic martyrdoms (BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v; the San Paolo doors; Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91r).

97 For a different identification of the remains of the fresco, see M. Gligorijević-Maksimović, "Scene iz života svetog Marka u vizantijskoj umetnosti," *Saopštenja* 25 (1993): 41–54, at 47.

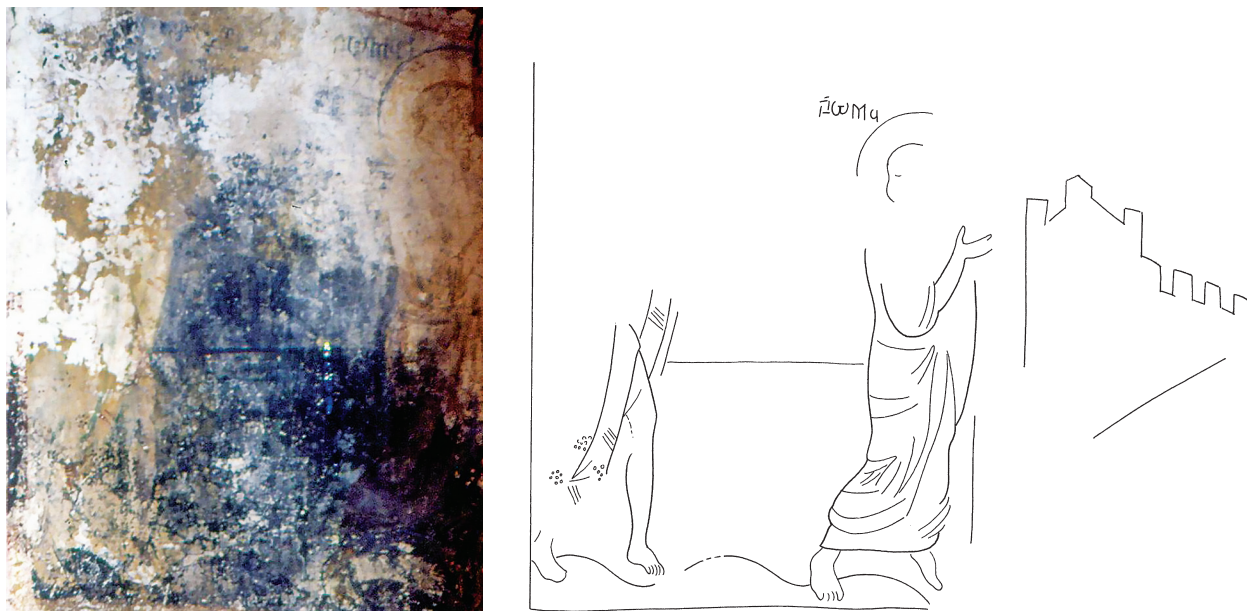


Fig. 26. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, parekklēsiōn above the diaconicon, martyrdom of the apostle Thomas. Left: photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Right: drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

The Martyrdom of Thomas

The last image to be mentioned here is the scene of the martyrdom of the apostle Thomas (Fig. 26).⁹⁸ On the considerably damaged fresco, the figure of a soldier stabbing the apostle with a spear can be distinguished; next to Thomas's head, a partially preserved inscription reads Θωμᾶ. Dressed in a dark-gray chiton and dark-red himation, with his left hand raised to chest level, Thomas strides toward a city sprawling in front of him, his head turned toward his torturer.⁹⁹ Thomas died in India, where, on the orders of King Misdæus, he was taken into the mountains and stabbed with spears.¹⁰⁰ This apocryphal report is the linchpin of Thomas's martyrial iconography without significant changes

over time (6 October).¹⁰¹ In the majority of examples, Thomas adopts almost the same pose and gesture as seen in the Ohrid fresco (*Menologion of Basil II*, fol. 93;¹⁰² the Sinai hexaptych;¹⁰³ Metaphrastian menologion for October, Moscow, State Historical Museum, gr. 175, fol. 37v;¹⁰⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1, fol. 12r;¹⁰⁵ BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v [see above, Fig. 10];¹⁰⁶ the San Paolo doors [see above, Fig. 8], second image in the ninth row; Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, fol. 91r).¹⁰⁷ The closest parallels for the Ohrid fresco

98 In most cycles, the series of apostolic martyrdoms ends with Thomas's martyrdom: BnF, gr. 510; and Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208.

99 Miljković Pepek, "Ciklusot Stradanija apostolski," 102–3, fig. 10. See also Angeličin Žura, *Živopisot vo kapelata*, 18, fig. 23, drawing 24; and Angeličin Žura, "Freskoživopisot vo kapelata," 49.

100 Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden*, 274–75; and James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 434–37, 469.

101 *Synaxarium CP* 113–15.

102 *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fol. 93.

103 Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexaptych*, 53, pl. 4.

104 A distinctive feature of the miniature is a demon-like, dark-skinned soldier; see Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts*, 53.

105 The apostle's conversation with two men shows that more elaborate illustrations of Thomas's apocryphal vita appeared later, and they included events preceding his death. See Hutter, *El Menologio de Oxford*, 73.

106 Omont, *Miniatures*, 14, pl. XXII.12; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 255, fig. 8.

107 Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XIV; Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion," 72; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 255, fig. 109.

can be found in representative works of Byzantine art—BnF, gr. 510, and the Sinai icon-hexaptych—but compelling parallels are also present in the *Menologion of Basil II* and on the San Paolo doors.

*The Composition of the Ohrid Apostolic Cycle:
A Possible Reconstruction*

A comparative analysis enables a secure dating of the Ohrid frescoes to the late eleventh century. The close relationship between them and the *Menologion of Basil II*, the Sinai icon-hexaptych, and the San Paolo doors suggests that they all originate from a common model produced in the Constantinopolitan milieu. However, the content of the two scenes remains uncertain. Drawing on reliable parallels, we can attempt to identify the content of the third scene, which is heavily damaged. As mentioned above, we can still observe the end of a sarcophagus and the fragment of a gently bent figure with its arms outstretched, visible up to the elbows (Fig. 27). Given that the burial and ascension of St. John the Theologian appears in the surviving cycles from the Byzantine period (Fig. 28, Table 1),¹⁰⁸ and that a sarcophagus or open grave is a common and important element of its iconography,¹⁰⁹ there are grounds to assume that the third scene in the Ohrid cycle was dedicated to St. John the Theologian.¹¹⁰ According to legend, he was the only apostle who did not suffer a martyr's death and was, on his own wishes, buried alive



Fig. 27. Hagia Sophia, Ohrid, pareklēsion above the diaconicon, fragment of the unidentified scene (burial of St. John the Theologian?). Photo by Goce Angeličin Žura; courtesy of the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum in Ohrid. Drawing by Antanasije Punoševac; courtesy of the Board for the History of Art, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

108 The scene is found in BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v, on the San Paolo doors, in Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, and at San Marco in Venice (restored in the seventeenth century). See Omont, *Miniatures*, pl. XXII.7; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, figs. 8, 109; Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XIII; and Demus, *The Mosaics*, 1.1:220, fig. 39.

109 Notable examples include the San Paolo doors; images for 26 September in the *Menologion of Basil II*; the Sinai icon-hexaptych; Oxford, Bodleian Library, gr. th. f. 1; Gračanica; Dečani; Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XIII; *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fol. 68; Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexaptych*, 51, pl. 3; Hutter, *El Menologio de Oxford*, 71, fol. 11r; Mijović, *Menolog*, 234, 289, 320, fig. 177; and Kesić-Ristić and Vojvodić, "Menolog," 380.

110 The only other possibility for which there are iconographic grounds is that this depicts the martyrdom of Jude Thaddeus, which is represented only in BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v. However, as we have seen, in all later cycles the evangelist Luke replaced Jude Thaddeus. For that reason, the inclusion of the old "redaction" seems very unlikely. The example in the apostolic cycle from San Marco in Venice is not a suitable parallel because the Latin legend *Passio Simonis et Judae* served as the hagiographic source for that depiction of Jude's martyrdom; see Demus, *The Mosaics*, 1.1:224–25, 361, 2.1:figs. 362, 374.

before ascending to heaven.¹¹¹ Finally, owing to the comparative evidence provided by similar monuments, one could propose what may have been originally depicted in the second destroyed scene. If we assume that the eleventh scene in the Ohrid cycle showed the death of James, son of Zebedee, there are grounds to believe that the second field originally featured the

111 Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 257–66; and James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 266–70, 464.

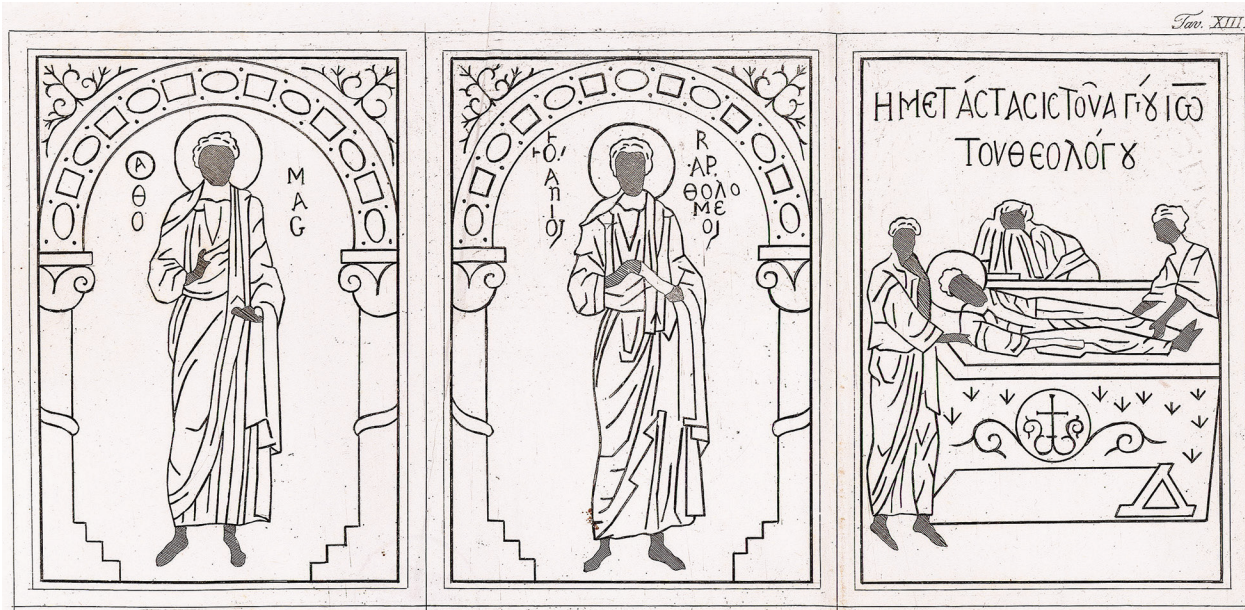


Fig. 28. San Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome, bronze doors, burial of St. John the Theologian (third image). After N. M. Nicolai, *Della Basilica di S. Paolo: Opera di Niccolò Maria Nicolai romano, votante della segnatura di grazia con piante, e disegni incisi* (Rome, 1815), pl. XIII. Courtesy of the Archivio storico dell'Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome.

Table 1. Composition of the Apostolic Group in Cycles of Apostolic Martyrdoms

BnF, gr. 510	San Paolo doors*, Rome	Hagia Sophia, Ohrid	Saba 208**	San Marco, Venice, Lives of the Apostles
Peter	Paul	Luke	Peter (91r)	Peter***
Paul	Peter	Destroyed (Mark?)	Paul (91r)	Paul***
Andrew	Andrew	John the Theologian?	Andrew (91r)	John***
James, son of Zebedee	John the Theologian	Matthew	James, son of Zebedee (91r)	James the Greater***
Mark	Bartholomew	Paul	John the Theologian (91v)	Andrew***
Matthew	Thomas	Peter	Luke (91v)	Thomas***
John the Theologian	Philip	Andrew	Matthew (91v)	James the Less
Jude Thaddeus	James, son of Zebedee	Simon	Mark (91v)	Philip
Simon	Simon	Philip	Bartholomew (91v)	Bartholomew
Philip	Matthew	Bartholomew	Simon (91v)	Matthew
Bartholomew	Luke	James, son of Zebedee?	Thomas (91v)	Simon
Thomas	Mark	Thomas	Philip (92 r)	Jude Thaddeus

* The original arrangement of the scenes on the doors of the Roman church is still a matter of debate. See E. Josi, V. Federici, and E. Ercadi, *La porta bizantina di S. Paolo* (Rome, 1967); and L. Bevilacqua, "La porta bizantina di S. Paolo fuori le Mura: Fonti, documenti e testimonianze grafiche (XVI–XIX secolo)," *Nuovi annali della scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari* 19 (2005): 185–205, figs. 1–15. The restored version shows a series of martyrdoms: Paul, Peter, Andrew, John the Theologian, Bartholomew, Thomas, Philip, James (son of Zebedee), Simon, Matthew, Luke, and Mark; see M. E. Frazer, "Church Doors and the Gates of Paradise: Byzantine Bronze Doors in Italy," *DOP* 27 (1973): 145–62, at 155, n. 42, fig. 17.

** The martyrdoms of the apostles are arranged in three miniatures: 91r, 91v, and 92r.

*** Restored in the seventeenth century.

martyrdom of St. Mark, which was depicted in almost every Byzantine cycle of apostolic martyrdoms (see above, Table 1).¹¹² That would mean that the first four scenes of the cycle have been dedicated to the evangelists and apostles Luke, Mark, John, and Matthew. That hypothetical arrangement has parallels in Byzantine apostolic cycles, for instance, Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208.¹¹³ Also relevant to this inquiry is the choice of apostolic figures in the calendar illustrations of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles on the icons from St. Catherine's Monastery from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, discussed in the second section.¹¹⁴ In view of the iconographic and programmatic principles of apostolic martyrdoms in the Ohrid upper-story pareklēsis, there is no reason to believe that it departed from the same model in the case of the damaged or destroyed scenes. However, this hypothesis, although plausible, cannot be proven.



As noted above, Byzantine cycles of apostolic martyrdoms have yet to be a subject of systematic study. I hope that the following conclusions take a step further in that direction. The corpus of menologion imagery is impressive and enables us to place the cycles of apostolic martyrdom in the appropriate iconographic context. However, what can we discern when we separate the cycles from their source? First, one might observe the lack of dynamism in the development and spread of this hagiographical cycle. Instead, during the Middle Byzantine period, the focus was on individual examples of extracting apostolic martyrdoms from a larger corpus of menologia. Second, the available data from these examples reveal their specific cultural context. All of them were created at the

request of commissioners from court (Emperor Basil I, Pantaleone, official and diplomat) or church (Patriarch Photios, archbishop of Ohrid, Lavra of St. Sabbas near Jerusalem) circles, for whom the cult of the holy apostles was of great importance. Additionally, all of them point to a Constantinopolitan origin or influence. To state the obvious, Constantinople was the center of cultic devotion to and liturgical celebration of the holy apostles. However, the iconographic aspect of the cult shows that during this period, it hadn't gained popularity throughout Byzantium. This iconographic theme will see significant development only in post-Byzantine art.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the significance of Middle Byzantine cycles of the apostolic martyrdoms is by no means negligible. After the early unusual selection of the apostles (BnF, gr. 510),¹¹⁶ the later apostolic martyrdoms exhibit the standardization of the composition of the apostolic group (see above, Table 1), which will become a constant in the later period, as evidenced by the imagery of post-Byzantine Orthodox churches.¹¹⁷ This was preceded by gradual changes in the cult celebration of the holy apostles in Constantinople from the late ninth to the end of the twelfth century—specifically, the formation of the collegium of the twelve apostles—which will be discussed in the next section.

115 The cycles of apostolic martyrdoms of the post-Byzantine period are found in the churches of the Greek lands, Moldavia, Wallachia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. For the examples, see A. Strati, *Ο ναός των Εισοδίων της Θεοτόκου Τσιατσιαπά στην Καστοριά / The Church of the Presentation of Virgin Mary of Tsiatsiapa in Kastoria* (Kastoria, 2015), 17, 21–22, figs. 13, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29; Koukiales, *Μηνολόγια και Μαρτυρολόγια*, 293–460; C. Popa et al., *Repertoriul picturii murale brâncovenesti: Județul Vâlcea*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 2008), 68, 120, 182, 232, 282; B. Penkova and T. Kuneva, eds., *Korpus na stenopisite ot XVII vek v Balgariia* (Sofia, 2012), 157, 173, drawing on 160; and Popović, “Predstave stradanja.”

116 Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 255.

117 Complete cycles of apostolic martyrdoms are a distinctive feature of the thematic repertoire of the monumental art created during the reign of the Wallachian prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714). See Popa et al., *Repertoriul picturii*, 68, 111, 120, 182, 235, 252, 282. They also appear in Greek and Bulgarian churches. For Greek churches, see, e.g., the katholikon of the Megali Panaghia Monastery on the island of Samos, sixteenth century, and the Church of the Holy Apostles, Agia, Larissa, 1756/1757; Koukiales, *Μηνολόγια και Μαρτυρολόγια*, 305, 425. For Bulgarian examples, see the Church of St. Athanasios, Arbanasi (1667), and the Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin, Arbanasi (1684–1692): Penkova and Kuneva, *Korpus*, 157, 173, drawing on 160.

112 Visualizing the legend of St. Mark's martyrdom in Alexandria, where the evangelist was dragged through the streets and beaten, has a standardized iconography. See BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v; the San Paolo doors; Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, 91v; Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 2.2:329–44; Omont, *Miniatures*, 14, pl. XXII.5; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 251, fig. 8; Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XV; and Baumstark, “Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion,” 72. See also Gligorijević-Maksimović, “Scene iz života svetog Marka.”

113 The miniature on Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, 91v, features the evangelists and apostles John, Luke, Matthew, and Mark.

114 See below, nn. 138–41.

The Cult of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople: Evidence of Liturgy, Hagiography, Homilies, and Poems

What are the underpinnings of the selection of the apostles in the Ohrid and other similar cycles? Was devotion to the apostles and liturgical celebration in honor of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles reflected in those works of art, and if so, in what way?

There are four lists of the original twelve apostles in the New Testament—in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 10:1–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:13–16) and the Acts of the Apostles (1:13).¹¹⁸ The cultivation of the memory of the persons and work of the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples in early Byzantium included collating information about their origin, place of birth, missionary activities, martyrdom, and funeral. These so-called lists of the apostles developed into a genre in its own right in apocryphal literature.¹¹⁹ In terms of their composition, these apostolic hand lists draw on the New Testament, but the earliest tradition underwent some changes due to new interpretations of the apostolic legacy. In all lists, Matthias replaced Judas Iscariot (pseudo-Epiphanius, seventh/eighth century; pseudo-Dorotheos, tenth century; pseudo-Hippolytus, tenth century),¹²⁰ and Paul was commonly added to the Twelve as the thirteenth apostle.¹²¹ Very rarely, the lists could be expanded, and in that case, they also included

the evangelists Mark and Luke (pseudo-Epiphanius).¹²² Besides Matthew, the lists could also contain the princes of the apostles, but James, son of Alphaeus, and Jude Thaddeus retained their places. This makes it clear that lists of the apostles, although they had considerable influence on the creation of the apostolic group in the earliest extant cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles in BnF, gr. 510, fol. 32v,¹²³ did not have a decisive role in determining the composition of the Twelve in the later Ohrid cycle.

On the other hand, relevant information can be found in hagiographical parts of synaxaria intended for the liturgical celebration of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles. In a seminal synthesis of the literature on the holy apostles, Theodor Schermann noted, at the beginning of the twentieth century, that Greek synaxaria include pseudo-Dorotheos's *List of the Apostles and Disciples*.¹²⁴ However, the limited number of liturgical sources he discussed did not allow this scholar to appreciate the full complexity of the manuscript tradition of the Constantinopolitan synaxarion. Therefore, it is important to highlight Patmos, Monastery of St. John the Theologian, cod. 266, ca. 900, believed to be the earliest witness of the *Typikon of the Great Church of Constantinople*.¹²⁵ Recent scholarship has considered Patmiacus 266 in the light of the Constantinopolitan liturgical tradition from the end of the ninth and the first half of the tenth century, and recognized the similarities of its hagiographical components with pre-Metaphrastian menologion texts.¹²⁶ In Patmiacus 266, the entry for 30 June includes a short commemoration of the holy apostles: Peter, Paul, Andrew, Simon, Thomas, James (son of Zebedee), Mark, Luke, Matthew,

118 The order might be a little different, but Peter is always the first, and the most prominent members of the Twelve also include James and John (the sons of Zebedee), Andrew, and Philip. They are followed by Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Jude Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and, lastly, if mentioned at all, Judas Iscariot.

119 The presence of collections of apostolic dossiers in the Greek manuscript tradition, usually written under pseudonyms, goes back to the seventh or eighth century. The majority of Greek lists of the apostles were published by Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 107–84; *BHG* 150–54; and *BHG NovAuct* 150–54k, 155, 156b. This corpus has grown with the identification of new manuscripts: see M. van Esbroeck, “Neuf listes d’apôtres orientales,” *Augustinianum* 34.1 (1994): 109–99; and C. Guignard, “Greek Lists of the Apostles: New Findings and Open Questions,” *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 20.3 (2016): 469–95. Vinogradov, “Apostol’skie spiski,” brings a systematized overview of the editions of texts.

120 Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 107–17, 153–57, 164–67; *BHG* 150–54; and *BHG NovAuct* 150m, 152, 152b, 152h, 152n, 152z.

121 Guignard, “Greek Lists,” 470, 484–85.

122 Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 107–17. See also Guignard, “Greek Lists,” 470.

123 Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 245–57.

124 Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, LX, 184–97.

125 The manuscript contains the synaxarion and typikon for the whole year. It was published by A. A. Dmitrievskii, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisei, khrańashchikhsia v bibliotekakh Pravoslavnogo Vostoka*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Kyiv, 1895), 84. See also *Synaxarium CP X–XI*. Their content is included in the critical edition of Jerusalem, the Monastery of the Cross, cod. 40, in J. Mateos, ed., *Le typicon de la Grande Église: Ms. Sainte-Croix no 40, X^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1962–1963). For the dating, see *Synaxarium CP X*; and Mateos, *Le typicon de la Grande Église*, 1:X–XVIII.

126 A. Luzzi, “Il Patmiacus 266: Un testimone dell’utilizzo liturgico delle epitomi premetafrastiche,” *RSSN* 49 (2012): 239–62.

John, Bartholomew, and Philip (Τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων Πέτρου, Παύλου, Ἀνδρέου, Σίμωνος, Θωμᾶ, Ἰακώβου, Μάρκου, Λουκᾶ, Ματθαίου, Ἰωάννου, Βαρθολομαίου καὶ Φιλίππου).¹²⁷ The same composition of the apostolic group reappears in a more elaborate hagiographic form in the later synaxarion for March–August (BnF, gr. 1575, twelfth century). The hagiographic entry for the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles in this manuscript contains apocryphal descriptions of the martyrdoms of the Twelve.¹²⁸ These two examples differ from the majority of other synaxaria of the *Typikon of the Great Church* in that the Twelve include Luke and Mark instead of James (son of Alphaeus) and Jude Thaddeus.¹²⁹

Byzantine homiletic literature is another important source for our discussion.¹³⁰ Among the texts to be read on the feasts of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles in panegyrics, collections of encomia of saints, and homilies on feasts arranged in the order of reading throughout the liturgical year, the most widespread is the encomium *Eis τοὺς ἁγίους δώδεκα ἀποστόλους* (*On the Twelve Apostles*), attributed to John Chrysostom.¹³¹ After the opening passage, the author lists the twelve apostles, adding short notes about their missions:

127 Dmitrievskii, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisei*, 84. Hippolyte Delehaye noted that the same list of the apostles appears in MS H (Jerusalem, the Monastery of the Cross, cod. 40); see *Synaxarium CP* 779–80 (*Synaxaria Selecta*). However, based on the critical edition, it can be noted that the entry for 30 June includes Peter, Paul, Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Matthias, Jude Thaddeus, and Simon the Zealot. See Mateos, *Le typicon de la Grande Église*, 1:326–27.

128 For basic information about the manuscript, see *Synaxarium CP* XXXVIII (Ra). The text was published by Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 184, 194–96.

129 *Synaxarium CP* 779–82. The celebration of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles can appear in a shorter version, without the list of the apostles. See, e.g., 30 June in synaxaria of the patriarchal lectionaries from ca. 1100: J. Lowden, *The Jaharis Gospel Lectionary: The Story of a Byzantine Book* (New York, 2009), 23–26, 111, app. I. See also the liturgical typikon of the Evergetis Synaxarion from the first quarter of the twelfth century: R. H. Jordan, *The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis* (Belfast, 2005), 175–77.

130 For the most extensive collection of manuscripts of the hagiographic-homiletic tradition, see A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1937–1952).

131 PG 59:495–98; Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 206; BHG 159; and M. C. Pantelia, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: A Bibliographic Guide to the Canon of Greek Authors and Works* (Oakland, CA, 2022), 426, no. 227.

Πέτρος ἐντεῦθεν μαθητεύει τὴν Ῥώμην.
Παῦλος ἐκεῖθεν εὐαγγελίζεται κόσμον.
Ἀνδρέας τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφοὺς διορθοῦται.
Σίμων διδάσκει τὸν Θεὸν τοὺς βαρβάρους.
Θωμᾶς διὰ βαπτίσματος λευκαίνει τοὺς Αἰθίοπας.
Ἰακώβου τὴν καθέδραν ἡ Ἰουδαία τιμᾷ.
Μάρκου τὸν θρόνον Ἀλεξάνδρεια ἡ παρὰ Νεῖλον
ἀσπάζεται.
Λουκᾶς καὶ Ματθαῖος γράφουσι τὰ Εὐαγγέλια.
Ἰωάννης ἐτι θεολογῶν καὶ μετὰ τέλος ὡς ζῶν
θεραπεύει τὴν Ἔφεσον.
Βαρθολομαῖος παιδαγωγεῖ σωφρονεῖν τοὺς
Λυκάονας.
Φίλιππος θαυματουργῶν σώζει τὴν Ἱεράπολιν.

Peter educates Rome there.

Paul preaches from there the gospel to the world.

Andrew sets straight the sages of Greece.

Simon teaches the barbarians about God.

Thomas whitens the Ethiopians through baptism.

James's seat is honored by Judaea.

Mark's throne is cherished by Alexandria on the Nile.

Luke and Matthew write the gospels.

John, besides committing to theology, heals

Ephesus even after death as in life.

Bartholomew guides Lycaonians to wisdom of moderation.

Philip saves Hierapolis by working miracles.¹³²

This text is an element of the earliest Greek miscellany, comprising panegyrics and martyrologia¹³³ and the panegyrics that, according to Albert Ehrhard's classification, belong to the pre-Metaphrastian period.¹³⁴ Toward the end of this period, the encomium written

132 The translation is mine.

133 These include Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, cod. 6, ninth/tenth century; BnF, cod. 1447, tenth/eleventh century; BnF, cod. 1453, eleventh century; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocc. 174, tenth/eleventh century: A. Papadopoulou-Kerameos, *Ιεροσολυμιτική βιβλιοθήκη: ἡτοι κατάλογος των εν ταις βιβλιοθήκαις του αγιωτάτου αποστολικού τε και καθολικού ορθοδόξου πατριαρχικού θρόνου των Ιεροσολύμων και πάσης Παλαιστίνης αποκειμένων ελληνικών κωδίκων*, vol. 1 (Petrooupoli, 1891), 19, 24; and Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, 1:178, 268, 279, 367.

134 These include BnF, gr. 582, tenth or eleventh century; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocc. 199, tenth or eleventh century; and Vatican

for the Twelve by Niketas David Paphlagon began to appear.¹³⁵ Metaphrastian menologia do not stipulate the celebration of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles,¹³⁶ but in so-called expanded Metaphrastian menologia and younger hagiographic collections, the Twelve are still remembered on 30 June with the reading of John Chrysostom's text.¹³⁷ This brief overview shows that the list of the apostles that includes Peter and Paul and the four evangelists appeared in Constantinople in the liturgical celebration of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles in synaxarion commemorations and hagiographic and celebratory texts from the late ninth century. The iconographic aspect of the holy apostles' cult also involves the question of the selection of apostolic figures. The earliest visual evidence includes calendar illustrations of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles on the icons from St. Catherine's Monastery—an eleventh-century hexptych,¹³⁸ a menologion diptych with feast scenes from the late eleventh century,¹³⁹ and a twelfth-century menologion icon for June.¹⁴⁰ All the examples show the same iconographic scheme—the

central place in the composition belongs to the standing evangelists, while the other members of the apostolic group are represented without iconographical characterization.¹⁴¹

The literary aspects of the holy apostles' cult also point us in the direction of the capital of the empire. First of all, there is *On the Twelve Apostles* (*In XII apostolos*), a poem that has been classed, under the number ninety, in the opus of the renowned intellectual, author, and courtier Michael Psellos (1018–after 1081?), although his authorship has yet to be conclusively proven.¹⁴² Wolfram Hörandner notes that the poem has a mnemotechnic function, which, in a way, associates it with eleventh-century didactic poetry.¹⁴³ Regardless of the attribution question, which lies beyond the scope of this paper,¹⁴⁴ the verses dedicated to the martyrdoms of the twelve apostles are an important source that elucidates their veneration in the now lost church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople.¹⁴⁵ According to the available sources, these verses were initially written in front of the entrance to the church (στίχοι εἰς τὸ ἐξώφυλλον τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων ἐν ᾧ ἱστόρηται πῶς ἐτελειώθησαν).¹⁴⁶ Their copies have survived in a

City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 455, tenth or eleventh century: Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, 2:79, 101, 116.

135 These are eleventh-century panegyrics: Mount Athos, Monastery of Great Lavra, cod. 232; BnF, gr. 755; and Moscow, Synodal Library, Mosq. 388. See Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, 2:237–38. For the encomium of Niketas David Paphlagon, a prolific hagiographer who worked under the patronage of Leo VI (886–912), see *BHG* 160; and S. Paschalides, *Νικήτας Δαβίδ Παφλαγών: Τὸ πρόσωπο καὶ τὸ ἔργο του; Συμβολὴ στὴ μελέτῃ τῆς προσωπογραφίας καὶ τῆς αἰτιολογικῆς γραμματείας τῆς προμεταφραστικῆς περιόδου* (Thessaloniki, 1999), 204–6.

136 Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, 2:614–60.

137 Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, 3:59, 63, 66, 72, 264, 320, 457, 460, 507.

138 Inscription: Α. Ἡ σύναξις τῶν ἱεροσολύμων. See Galavaris, *An Eleventh Century Hexptych*, 115–16, pl. 12.

139 On this icon, see selectively G. Soteriou and M. Soteriou, *Εἰκόνες τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1956–1968), 1:figs. 131–35, 2:119–20; Mijović, *Menolog*, 180, n. 102; K. A. Manafis, ed., *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine* (Athens, 1990), 148–49, fig. 17; R. S. Nelson, “Menologion Diptych with Feast Scenes,” in *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, ed. R. S. Nelson and K. M. Collins (Los Angeles, 2006), 195, no. 30; and G. R. Parpulov, “Mural and Icon Painting at Sinai in the Thirteenth Century,” in *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*, ed. S. E. J. Gerstel and R. S. Nelson (Turnhout, 2010), 345–414, at 412.

140 This icon belongs to a twelve-panel series, now placed on twelve marble pillars in the basilica of the Sinai monastery. From this set, the icons for February–May and July–August have been published: Soteriou and Soteriou, *Εἰκόνες*, 1:figs. 126–30, 2:117–19; Manafis, *Sinai*, 53, 161, figs. 22, 30; Parpulov, “Mural and Icon Painting,” 384;

and N. P. Ševčenko, “Menologion Icon for August,” in Nelson and Collins, *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground*, 197, no. 31.

141 The photographs of the icons are available in digitized form on the internet. The respective URL link is listed on the website The Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expeditions to Mount Sinai.

142 Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 204–5; *BHG NovAuct* 156e; and L. G. Westerink, ed., *Michaelis Pselli Poemata* (Stuttgart, 1992), 461–63, with references to earlier editions.

143 W. Hörandner, “The Byzantine Didactic Poem—A Neglected Literary Genre?,” in *Poetry and Its Contexts in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. F. Bernard and K. Demoen (Farnham, 2012), 55–67, at 62.

144 PG 120, 1196. L. G. Westerink classes the poem *On the Twelve Apostles* among *spuria*; see Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, 461–63. In earlier scholarship, the poem was attributed to John Mauropus (ca. 990–ca. 1080), an intellectual and the metropolitan of Euchaita, also known for being Michael Psellos's teacher. See also Schermann, *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae*, 204–5. For John Mauropus and Michael Psellos, see F. Bernard, “The 11th Century: Michael Psellos and Contemporaries,” in *A Companion to Byzantine Poetry*, ed. W. Hörandner, A. Rhoby, and N. Zagklas (Leiden, 2019), 212–36, with further bibliography.

145 On the Holy Apostles, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1953), 46–53.

146 Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, 462, 90 x^c.

number of manuscripts produced from the twelfth to the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁷ Since their content is consistent with the choice of preserved iconographic depictions of apostolic martyrdoms in the parekklēsiōn of Hagia Sophia at Ohrid, I quote the poem in full:

Σταυροῖ Πέτρον κύμβαχον ἐν Ῥώμῃ Νέρων.
Ῥώμῃ ξίφει θνήσκοντα τὸν Παῦλον βλέπει.
εἰρηνικῶ τέθνηκε Λουκᾶς ἐν τέλει.
ζωῆς ὕπνον πρύτανιν ὕπνοι Ματθαῖος.
Μάρκον θανατοῖ δῆμος Ἀλεξανδρέων.
καὶ μὴ θανῶν ζῇ καὶ θανῶν Ἰωάννης.
σταυροῦσι Πατρεῖς ἄνδρες ὡμῶς Ἀνδρέαν.
νεκροῦσι λόγχοι τὸν Θωμᾶν ἐν Ἰνδία.
Βαρθολομαῖος σταυρικῶ θνήσκει πάθει.
καὶ τὸν Σίμωνα σταῦρος ἐξάγει βίου.
μάχαιρα τέμνει τοὺς Ἰακώβου δρόμους.
ἴσον Πέτρῳ δίδωσι Φίλιππος μόρον.¹⁴⁸

Nero crucifies Peter with the head upside down
in Rome.

Rome sees Paul, dying by a sword.

Luke meets a peaceful end.

Matthew sleeps the sleep presiding over life.

A crowd of Alexandrians puts Mark to death.

Both not having died and having died, John
lives.

Men of Patras cruelly crucify Andrew.

Spears bring death to Thomas in India.

Bartholomew dies suffering on the cross.

The cross ends the life of Simon too.

A dagger cuts short the path of James.

Philip shares the same fate as Peter.¹⁴⁹

A report from one group of copies informing us that the verses describing the deaths of the twelve apostles stood in front of the entrance to the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople or on the wall of a kind of porch could be very significant.¹⁵⁰ Given that

Byzantine culture is characterized by a “synergy of visual art and text,”¹⁵¹ it would be difficult to imagine this kind of literary inscription without some sort of visual accompaniment. Although the hypothesis that the verses could have been inscribed next to visual representations of apostolic martyrdoms in the Holy Apostles complex seems plausible,¹⁵² that matter cannot be conclusively resolved with the knowledge we have at this point—the information found in the verse ekphrasis of the holy apostles, which Constantine the Rhodian dedicated to the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (tenth century),¹⁵³ and the lengthy prose description written by Nicholas Mesarites between 1198 and 1203,¹⁵⁴ which have played a significant role in the discussions over the architectural and decorative forms of the lost Constantinopolitan church.¹⁵⁵ Neither of

Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. by H. S. Jones, with the assistance of R. McKenzie (Oxford, 1940).

151 On this issue, see I. Drpić and A. Rhoby, “Byzantine Verses as Inscriptions: The Interaction of Text, Object, and Beholder,” in Hörandner, Rhoby, and Zagklas, *A Companion to Byzantine Poetry*, 430–55; I. Drpić, “Inscriptions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*, ed. S. Papaioannou (Oxford, 2021), 381–406, esp. 381, 389–93, with literature; and P. Magdalino, “Cultural Change? The Context of Byzantine Poetry from Geometres to Prodromos,” in Bernard and Demoen, *Poetry and Its Contexts*, 19–36, at 32–33.

152 See Westerink’s commentary in *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, XXXI–XXXII, 461–62.

153 A complete English translation was more recently published by L. James, ed., *Constantine of Rhodes, on Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles* (Farnham, 2012), 15–94.

154 See the critical edition by A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche, zwei Basiliken Konstantins*, vol. 2, *Die Apostelkirche in Konstantinopel* (Leipzig, 1908), 10–96; and an English translation by G. Downey, “Nikolaos Mesarites, Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople,” *TAPS*, n.s., 47.6 (1957): 855–924.

155 For the history of research and hypothetical reconstructions of the Holy Apostles, based on textual evidence and comparative architectural material, see N. Karydis, “Justinian’s Church of the Holy Apostles: A New Reconstruction Proposal,” in Mullett and Ousterhout, *The Holy Apostles*, 99–131, with older bibliography. On the question of dating of the mosaics, see selectively A. W. Epstein, “The Rebuilding and Redecoration of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople: A Reconsideration,” *GRBS* 23.1 (1982): 79–92; N. Zarras, “A Gem of Artistic Ekphrasis: Nicholas Mesarites’ Description of the Mosaics in the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople,” in *Byzantium, 1180–1204: “The Sad Quarter of a Century”?*, ed. A. Simpson (Athens, 2015), 261–82; and L. James, “Creating the Mosaics of the Holy Apostles,” in Mullett and Ousterhout, *The Holy Apostles*, 157–73.

147 The order of the verses is not the same in all copies. For a list of manuscripts, see Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, XXXI–XXXII.

148 Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, 462–63.

149 The translation is mine.

150 For the architectural element πύλη, see S. Kalopisi-Verti and M. Panagiotidi-Kesisoglou, eds., *Multilingual Illustrated Dictionary of Byzantine Architecture and Sculpture Terminology* (Herakleion, 2010), 268, figs. 535–37. For the meaning of the word ἐξώφυλλος, -ον, see H. G.

Table 2. Lists of the Twelve Apostles in Byzantine Liturgical, Hagiographical, Homiletic, and Poetic Sources

Synaxarion, Patmiacus 266	Synaxarion, BnF, gr. 1575	Encomium, <i>On the Twelve Apostles</i>	Poem, <i>On the Twelve Apostles</i>	Nicholas Mesarites' Ekphrasis of the Twelve Apostles
Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter
Paul	Paul	Paul	Paul	Paul
Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Luke	Luke
Simon	James, son of Zebedee	Simon	Matthew	Matthew
Thomas	John	Thomas	Mark	Mark
James, son of Zebedee	Luke	James, son of Zebedee	John	John
Mark	Matthew	Mark	Andrew	Andrew
Luke	Mark	Luke	Thomas	Thomas
Matthew	Bartholomew	Matthew	Bartholomew	Philip
John	Simon	John	Simon	James, son of Zebedee
Bartholomew	Thomas	Bartholomew	James, son of Zebedee	Simon
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip	Bartholomew

the two authors mentions the ἐξώπυλος or the deaths of the apostles.¹⁵⁶ The focus of their visually evocative rhetorical descriptions are architectural form, the impressive interior of the church, and its mosaic decoration.¹⁵⁷ However, the later source is particularly notable not only for its literary virtuosity but also for the opening part of the account, in which the orator Nicholas Mesarites invokes the aid of the apostles of the Lord. This is a conventional literary topos that, in line with the structure and rules of the rhetorical genre, expresses the author's view of his own capabilities as modest and invokes divine inspiration.¹⁵⁸ Unlike Constantine's short invocation of the "Word which enlightened the Apostles" (lines 543–45), Mesarites elaborately praises each

apostle individually by using encomiastic elements and plenty of allusions to classical authors, psalms, gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁵⁹ The list of the apostles begins with Peter and Paul, followed by the evangelists Luke, Matthew, Mark, and John, and then Andrew, Thomas, Philip, James (son of Zebedee), and finally Simon the Zealot and Bartholomew. Although the view that the invocation of the apostles represents an allusion to their depictions at the entrance to the church of the Holy Apostles seems implausible, it is significant that the members and order of the Twelve in Mesarites' description are the same as in one of the versions of the poem ascribed to Michael Psellos.¹⁶⁰ The results of the research conducted so far have shown that the *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople* was "a product of the intellectual and artistic environment of its time and place."¹⁶¹ In light of all of the above, it would not be wrong to infer that Mesarites' speech also reflected the aspects of Constantinopolitan cultic devotion to

156 For the accounts of the church decoration—descriptions of the images on the vault and walls—in both sources, see James, *Constantine of Rhodes*, 204–5; and James, "Creating the Mosaics."

157 For Mesarites' description of the Holy Apostles as a work of literature and its relevance for Byzantine art in the twelfth century, see R. Macrides, "The Logos of Nicholas Mesarites," in Mullett and Ousterhout, *The Holy Apostles*, 175–91; and H. Maguire, "Inside and Outside the Holy Apostles with Nicholas Mesarites," in Mullett and Ousterhout, *The Holy Apostles*, 193–207.

158 For this literary topos, see R. Macrides and P. Magdalino, "The Architecture of Ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentary's Poem on Hagia Sophia," *BMGs* 12 (1988): 47–82, at 51; and James, *Constantine of Rhodes*, 197–98.

159 Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche*, 23–26; and Downey, "Nikolaos Mesarites," 867–68. See the commentary in B. Daskas, "Nikolaos Mesarites, Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople: New Critical Perspectives," *Parekbolai* 6 (2016): 79–102, at 92.

160 Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, 462.

161 Maguire, "Inside and Outside," 193.

the apostles. In other words, the apostolic list in the so-called *Invocation of the Apostles*¹⁶² is an important piece of evidence that adds to our knowledge of the cultic celebration at the center of their veneration in Constantinople in the late Komnenian era.

Liturgical, hagiographical, homiletic, and poetic sources reveal some important aspects of the formation of the collegium of the twelve apostles from the late ninth to the end of the twelfth century in Constantinople (Table 2). The prominence of Peter and Paul and the four evangelists seems to have had a decisive role in the modification of the original members of the Twelve recorded in the gospels and the so-called lists of the apostles. The veneration of the holy apostles in Constantinople and liturgical celebration in honor of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles was reflected in the composition of the cycles dedicated to martyrdoms of the apostles in Byzantine art of that time.¹⁶³

The Painted Ensemble and Its Contexts

Spatial, Functional, and Liturgical Approaches

Although clearly integrated into the overall design of the building, the parekklēsia above the diaconicon of Hagia Sophia provides a specific spatial setting for the decorative program (see above, Fig. 1). A tiny chapel could have housed no more than a few people, and this raises questions about how it was accessed and who used it. This approach considers the spatial and liturgical settings of the frescoes as their context.

It is worth recalling, in regard to the first question, that the parekklēsia situated over the prothesis and the diaconicon had limited access. These two rooms have elongated rectangular floor plans with semicircular apses on the east (see above, Fig. 4). They have narrow

windows in the apses; the north one is completely enclosed, while the south one has a small opening in the upper part of the western wall. The difference in the height of the side walls of these spaces is a result of a change in the superstructure of the church. After the collapse of the nave vaulting, the transept, and the dome over the crossing, the church was covered with a roof.¹⁶⁴ The enclosed and independent chapels were not visible from the interior of the building. This leads us to the question of the potential ways to access these spaces. Slobodan Ćurčić believes that they could have been reached through the galleries over the side aisles, which disappeared after the collapse.¹⁶⁵ Schellewald's reconstruction of the original interior arrangement shows that galleries were not included in the original architectural scheme of the church.¹⁶⁶ Instead, she proposes that the entrance door to the parekklēsia over the diaconicon could only have been located in the western part of the south wall of the chapel. She argues that this area differs from the wall structure of this section, meaning that it was covered with bricks at some later point. In addition, there are no traces of frescoes inside this walled-up section. The doors of the chapel could have been reached by a simple staircase attached to the south facade, the portico, or balconies, of which no traces have survived. Similarly, Schellewald offers an analogous explanation for the reconstruction of the original entrance door of the upper north chapel.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, internal access to the parekklēsia was not possible because of the barrel vaults of the southern and northern arm. It should be further noted that fragmentarily preserved frescoes of the original decorative program on the walls above the pastophoria speak in favor of this hypothesis.¹⁶⁸ The

162 See also the commentary in Downey, "Nikolaos Mesarites," 867, n. 4.

163 An isolated yet suggestive example is the abovementioned menaion for March–August, Jerusalem, Patriarchal Library, Saba 208, in which the feast of the Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles employs a visual concept that thematically and iconographically corresponds to the Martyrdom of the Apostles cycle. This emphasis on a feast that does not belong among the most important ones and has no visual analogies, as earlier researchers rightly noted, suggests the influence of Constantinople, the center of cultic devotion to and liturgical celebration of the holy apostles. See Baumstark, "Ein illustriertes griechisches Menaion," 75–76.

164 Ćurčić, "Architectural Significance," 107–10; Schellewald, "Zur Typologie," 200; Schellewald, "Die Architektur der Sophienkirche," 31, 34, 39–41, 49–51; and Korać, "Sveta Sofija," 31–32.

165 Ćurčić, "Architectural Significance," 107; and Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 399.

166 Schellewald, "Die Architektur der Sophienkirche," 49–51. See also Schellewald, "Zur Typologie," 207; and V. Korać, "O arhitekturi katedralnih crkava XI veka na vizantijskom kulturnom području," in *Između Vizantije i Zapada: Odabrane studije o arhitekturi* (Belgrade, 1987), 57–67, at 60, drawing 1. Korać, "Sveta Sofija," 30–32, fig. 1, shares the same opinion.

167 Schellewald, "Zur Typologie," 207; and Schellewald, "Die Architektur der Sophienkirche," 49–51.

168 For these fragments of frescoes, see P. Miljković Pepek, "Materijali za istorijatu na srednovekovnoto slikarstvo vo Makedonija 3: Freskite vo naosot i narteksot na crkvata Sv. Sofija vo Ohrid,"

upper-story parekklēsia of Hagia Sophia have their close parallel in the Theotokos church of the monastery tou Libos in Constantinople founded by Constantine Lips (907).¹⁶⁹ As Vasileios Marinis observes, the latter “is the only Byzantine building in which the roof chapels are so autonomous and so difficult to access.”¹⁷⁰ These two churches share the overall design of the upper-story chapels at the eastern and western parts of the building. There are also great similarities between the reconstructions of the arrangements in Theotokos tou Libos and Hagia Sophia at Ohrid. The possible entrances to their chapels pose a particularly challenging aspect for reconstruction. Although both are hypothetical, for lack of architectural evidence, they include solutions such as a portico, external open-air galleries in the form of balconies, or a staircase on the north and south sides of the buildings.¹⁷¹

Another study examining the possible access to the parekklēsia of Hagia Sophia takes a slightly different approach. The limited archaeological evidence and topographical situation indicate that Hagia Sophia couldn't have been an isolated monument but rather a part of a cathedral complex with a palace, possibly situated to the south of the church. Based on what little has survived of the vaults, Boris Čipan suggests that the southern side of the church might have opened onto a portico leading to an archbishopric palace, hence providing access to the parekklēsia over the diaconicon.¹⁷² Byzantine sources do not provide information about the life of the archbishops and the palace.¹⁷³ Some ideas of the

afterlife of the residence of Ohrid archbishops can only be inferred from the later textual sources.¹⁷⁴ In regard to this question, very significant are the recently excavated architectural remains of the medieval building with fresco painting in situ, in the area to the south of Hagia Sophia. Further examination of the finds could provide more information about whether the excavated structure originally served as a part of the palace complex.¹⁷⁵

While the existence of an archbishopric palace in Ohrid still remains a matter of conjecture, at least it might broaden our perspective on the original cathedral complex of Hagia Sophia, leading us to the second question: who used the parekklēsia above the diaconicon? We may begin to answer this question by stating that the functional purpose of the parekklēsia is evident within its cathedral context. Although the upper-story chapels are an integral part of the original foundation, I believe that specific functions were assigned to the structure above the diaconicon only after it received its fresco decoration.

Most likely, there is no single overarching explanation for the multiplication of chapels in Middle Byzantine architecture. It “might be due to the Byzantine perception of the role of saints in a person's salvation”¹⁷⁶ or for providing additional space for private devotions.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, considering that upper-level

Kulturno nasledstvo 3.1 (1966): 1–28, at figs. 1, 11; and R. Hamann-Mac Lean, *Grundlegung zu einer Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien* (Giessen, 1976), drawing on 228.

169 For this church, see A. H. S. Megaw, “The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips,” *DOP* 18 (1964): 279–98; Ćurčić, “Architectural Significance,” 109–10; and Marinis, “The Original Form.”

170 Marinis, “The Original Form,” 284.

171 For the reconstruction of the eastern roof chapels, see Marinis, “The Original Form,” 280–83.

172 Distinctions become more apparent if we compare the northern and southern sides of the naos in terms of the chronology of the repairs and archaeological evidence. For a detailed discussion on this problem, see B. Čipan, *Sveta Sofija katedralen bram na Ohridska arhiepiskopija: Hronologija na arhitekturalata* (Skopje, 1996), 107–9, drawing on 110–15, 126–27. See also Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans*, 398.

173 Theophylact, archbishop of Ohrid, in his letter (1097–1104) to *panhypersebastos* Nikephoros Bryennios mentions an “airy, high-rise

residence, where in summer I cool the furnace of my fleshiness,” but gives no details where it was. On this letter, see P. Gautier, *Theophylacte d'Achrida: Lettres*, vol. 2 (Thessalonike, 1986), 487.65–69; and M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Aldershot, 1997), 66–67, 132, 331 (G96), with older bibliography.

174 Catholic Archbishop Stojmirović noted around 1657 that the former patriarchal residence served as a residence for the Ohrid pasha. See A. Stojanovski, *Ohrid i Ohridsko niz istorijata*, vol. 2 (Skopje, 1985), 20. For Evliya Çelebi's account of Hagia Sophia and the nearby residence (*saray*), see L. Lape, *Odbrani četiva za istorijata na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 1951), 179.

175 According to the preliminary report, excavated portions of the walls with fresco painting should be interpreted as one of the reception rooms of the archbishopric palace. The construction technique suggests the eleventh to twelfth century, while fragments of frescoes require closer inspection. The numismatic finds date back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See P. Kuzman, “Archaeological Discovery to the South of the Saint Sophia Church in Ohrid,” *Arheološki informator* 4 (2020): 141–62.

176 Marinis, “Defining Liturgical Space,” 297–98; and Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, 80–84.

177 Schellewald, “Zur Typologie,” 218; and Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture*, 319, 355–56.

chapels, largely limited both in size and ways of access, appear in monastic complexes and in church buildings founded by members of the aristocracy and especially in large episcopal churches, it stands to reason that they could have served as settings for private devotional purposes of privileged users, such as founders, hegumens, and ecclesiastical dignitaries. Similarly, the elevated position and intimate space of the parekklēśion in Hagia Sophia gave archbishops and the cathedral's clergy a place for solitude and prayer. As we learn from comparable examples, these isolated chapels usually had small windows opening into the naos.¹⁷⁸ They allowed visual communication with the naos and service attendance. This practice prompts us to reconsider the same element in Hagia Sophia in Ohrid. As mentioned above, only the south parekklēśion had an opening, while the north one was completely closed. Besides, the latter remained without paintings. For these reasons, its function is not clear.¹⁷⁹ When was the western wall of the parekklēśion above the diaconicon pierced with a rectangular opening? There are no chronological parameters, but we should bear in mind, in this regard, that the wall in question was covered with frescoes of the original decoration. We should consider the possibility that such a solution followed the functional program of the chapel as conceived after its decoration unless it was part of the original design of the church.

Chapels could have served a variety of functions. Several liturgical purposes for the chapels have been proposed in scholarship, including private liturgical use by the clergy, corporate worship, and the commemorations of saints.¹⁸⁰ According to the textual sources, the eastern upper-story chapels could be also used as repositories for relics.¹⁸¹ The parekklēśion above the diaconicon in Hagia Sophia is equipped for the liturgy. Its liturgical function is evidenced by apses and the niche in the

northern wall, presumably intended for the Prothesis rite. The surviving material evidence, however, is too scarce to elucidate all nuances of the specific purposes of this apsidal space. There is no indication to discern how frequently it was used. Therefore, we will return to its visual program because the decoration of the chapel usually reflects its function. It is worth considering the relation of the apostolic cycle with other preserved paintings in the eastern upper-story chapel, for it can be the main point of reference to the liturgical focus of the chapel. The incomplete painted program of the Ohrid chapel—containing the apostolic cycle, an image of the Deesis, and archangel figures—should be understood in terms of the decorative system of subsidiary chapels in Byzantium, which focuses on the hagiographical cycle of the patron saint.¹⁸² Let us mention two chronologically close examples of subsidiary chapels dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul in cathedrals. One of the four chapels flanking the prothesis and diaconicon in the Kyiv cathedral of St. Sophia (1030–1040) is dedicated to the apostles Peter and Paul; the conch of the apse features a representation of St. Peter, and a few scenes from his life have survived on the lateral walls.¹⁸³ The side sanctuary apses of the cathedral at Monreale (1180–1190) are also dedicated to the princes of the apostles—the northern to Paul and the southern to Peter—and the walls of these spaces show scenes from their lives.¹⁸⁴ Thanks to a number of examples, we learn that the core element of the decorative programs indicates not only the dedication of the chapels but also one of their functions—the commemoration of the patron saint. One should add that the *Typikon of the Great Church* offers evidence of this liturgical use for the chapels.¹⁸⁵ This allows us to draw some interrelated conclusions concerning the upper chapel in Ohrid. First, it seems plausible that, despite

178 For some examples in Byzantine churches, see Ousterhout, *Eastern Medieval Architecture*, 354–56. For the same solution in Armenian and Georgian churches, see Schellewald, “Zur Typologie,” 188, 197, 212; and Teteriatnikov, “Upper-Story Chapels,” 69–70, figs. 18, 20.

179 See Todić, “Arhiepiskop Lav,” 121, n. 10.

180 Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*; T. F. Mathews, “‘Private’ Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Toward a Re-appraisal,” *CahArch* 30 (1982): 125–38; and Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, 78–80.

181 For Byzantine sources, see Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, 86. Parallel examples are found in Armenian sources: Schellewald, “Zur Typologie,” 215.

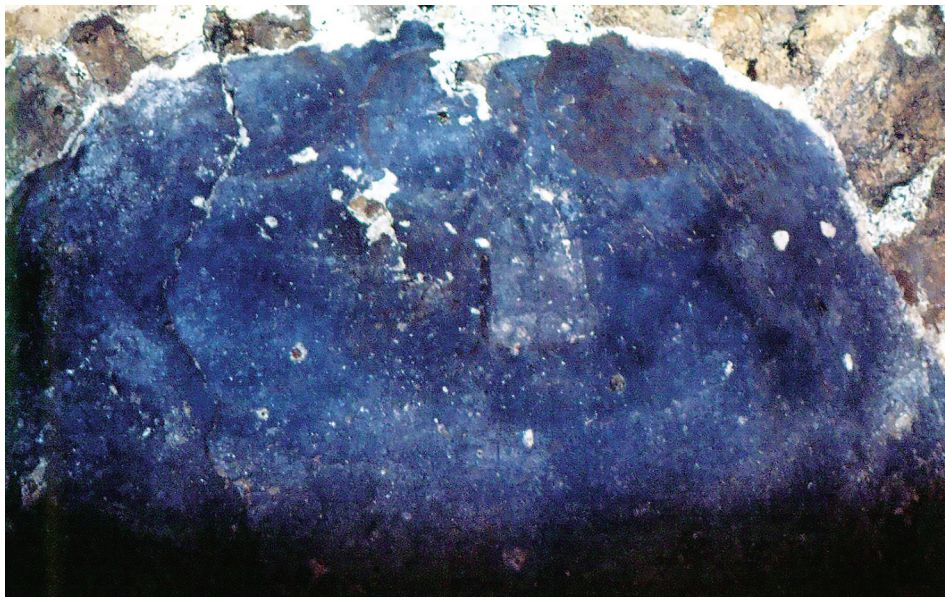
182 Babić, “Chapelles laterales”; Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*, 79–173; S. Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra* (Paris, 1970), 34–35, n. 308; and Marinis, “Parekklesion,” 753–56.

183 Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*, 106–7, fig. 71; and O. S. Popova and V. D. Sarab'ianov, *Mozaiiki i freski Sviatoi Sofii Kievskoi* (Moscow, 2017), 85, 87, fig. 68.

184 O. Demus, *Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1949), 244, 294–99.

185 See, e.g., the rubric for the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. James (23 October), which was celebrated in the parekklēśion of St. James in the Church of the Panagia en tois Chalkoprateios, as noted by Babić, *Les chapelles annexes*, 34–35; and Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, 79, with sources.

Fig. 29.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
parekklēision above the
diaconicon, Deesis.
Photo by Goce
Angeličin Žura;
courtesy of the Institute
for Protection of
Monuments of Culture
and Museum in Ohrid.
Drawing by Antanasije
Punoševac; courtesy of
the Board for the
History of Art, Serbian
Academy of Sciences
and Arts, Belgrade.



much of its imagery being lost, the Ohrid chapel was dedicated to the holy apostles.¹⁸⁶ Second, although we cannot rule out other liturgical activities, the decoration of the chapel above the diaconicon in the cathedral of Ohrid indicates that it was used primarily for the commemoration of the holy apostles, or possibly of Sts. Peter and Paul. Particularly revealing in regard to the question of the dedication and the abovementioned connection between Constantinople and Ohrid is the Theotokos church of the monastery tou Libos in Constantinople.

186 Todić, "Représentations de Papes Romains," 109, introduces the possibility that the chapel was dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul.

The founder's inscription carved on the eastern side of this church addresses the apostles, which suggests that one of the multiple dedications of the church might have been to the apostles.¹⁸⁷

What does the Deesis composition in the conch of the apse reveal about the use of the chapel and its program as a whole (Fig. 29)? It goes without saying that such a choice lends a special programmatic emphasis to the imagery of the Ohrid chapel. Seen as

187 C. Mango and E. J. W. Hawkins. "The Monastery of Lips (Fenari Isa Camii) at Istanbul: Additional Notes," *DOP* 18 (1964): 299–315, at 300, fig. 1.

a condensed representation of the Last Judgment, from the Middle Byzantine period on, the Deesis has been assigned strong eschatological and intercessory meanings. More specifically, the message of the Deesis could be communicated within its theological and liturgical contexts, including the funerary.¹⁸⁸ As the architectural and archaeological evidence give no indication, there is no reason to assign a funerary symbolism to the Deesis image in the conch of the Ohrid upper-story chapel. The intercessory role of the holy apostles, further underscored by means of the Deesis with archangels (Fig. 30), is a core iconographic concern of its program. It is worth recalling that the Deesis was routinely painted in the apses of churches and chapels in Cappadocia in the eleventh century. The composition often included archangel figures, and the idea of intercession was highlighted by including the figures of saints, including the apostles.¹⁸⁹

We can only speculate about the content of the missing part of the decoration.¹⁹⁰ However, some thoughts about how the frescoes interacted with their spatial context might help us understand how the small painted ensemble was originally experienced. The impression conveyed is that this type of decoration was formulated in response to the spatial, symbolic, and liturgical concerns of the subsidiary chapels of Byzantine churches. The entire architectural space of Ohrid's chapel, together with its imagery, had an integrative capacity to offer a particular kind of experience to devotees—one that had both visual and symbolic potential. Medieval viewers perceived it in terms of the Byzantine understanding of the role of saints in securing eternal salvation. Intended for liturgical activities and for personal devotion, the intimate space of Ohrid's chapel

could bring its users into close proximity with images that eloquently conveyed intercessory qualities.¹⁹¹

Pictorial Agency and Cathedral Context

Shifting the focus from spatial, liturgical, and functional considerations to cultural and historical settings allows us to advance the agency behind the cycle of apostolic martyrdoms. As we have seen in the previous section, the inclusion of the holy apostles' cult in Hagia Sophia connects Ohrid directly with the most important Constantinopolitan landmark. What does this reveal about the personality of the Ohrid archbishops and their aspirations? Does this choice reflect aspects of ideological concerns within the Archbishopric of Ohrid? How should we interpret the apostolic imagery in the cathedral context, more precisely in an area of the church that was only accessible to the archbishop and the cathedral's clergy? More broadly, was the case of the parekklētion above the diaconicon a continuation of the earlier-established tradition of close connections between Constantinople and the see of the Archbishopric of Ohrid? To begin answering these questions, it seems pertinent to look at the Archbishopric of Ohrid and its historical specificity.

After the second Byzantine "Reconquista" of the Balkans (1018), the Byzantine emperor Basil II (976–1025) reorganized the territory of the former Bulgarian Church as an archbishopric with its see in Ohrid. He established the privileges of the see in a string of imperial charters. The autocephaly of the newly created Archbishopric of Ohrid granted by Basil II rested upon the emperor's exclusive right to designate and appoint the archbishop. In turn, the Archbishopric of Ohrid consolidated its position as the most important ecclesiastical and political Byzantine institution in the Balkans, directly linked to the court in Constantinople.¹⁹² These

188 For the iconography and meanings of the Deesis in Byzantine art, see T. Velmans, "L' image de la Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans celles d' autres régions du monde byzantin: Première partie; La Déisis dans l' abside," *CahArch* 29 (1980–1981): 47–102; and A. Cutler, "Under the Sign of the Deesis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature," *DOP* 41 (1987): 145–54.

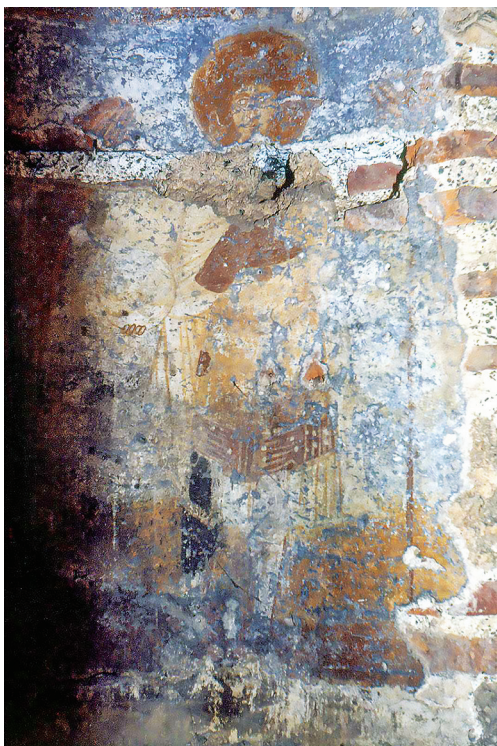
189 For the examples, see Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines*, 41, 74, 78, 86, 116, 123–24, 126, 130, 133, 136, 144, 149, 151–52, 223–24, 252, 258, 269, 273–74, 287; and Velmans, "L' image de la Déisis," 66.

190 Given that the cycle starts from the western part of the north wall and that the chapel was dedicated to the holy apostles, one could consider the possibility that it might have been part of the larger program with apostolic imagery situated on the southern and western walls of the chapel.

191 On the intercessory qualities of the subsidiary chapels in terms of their construction, function, and decoration, see Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, 77–87.

192 For the establishment, history, and territorial scope of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, see the pioneering monographs by H. Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida: Geschichte und Urkunden* (Leipzig, 1902); and I. Snegarov, *Istoriā na Okhridskata Arhiepiskopijā*, vol. 1, *Ot osnovavaneto i do zavladiavaneto na Balkanskiia poluostrov ot turcite* (Sofia, 1924). See also the more recent comprehensive study by G. Prinzing, "The Autocephalous Byzantine Ecclesiastical Province of Bulgaria/Ohrid: How Independent Were Its Archbishops?," *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 3.1 (2012): 355–83.

Fig. 30.
Hagia Sophia, Ohrid,
parekklē̃sion above the
diaconicon, archangels.
Photos by Goce Angeličin
Žura; courtesy of the
Institute for Protection of
Monuments of Culture and
Museum in Ohrid. Drawings
by Antanasije Punoševac;
courtesy of the Board for
the History of Art, Serbian
Academy of Sciences and
Arts, Belgrade.



events, which crucially reconfigured the political and cultural landscape of the Balkans with its predominantly Slavic population, also created conditions for the process of identity transformation of the Ohrid church, focusing on the replacement of the archbishopric's Bulgarian roots by a new Byzantine tradition. That was the initial ideological impetus of the much broader and long-lasting phenomenon of "Byzantinization/Rhomaization."¹⁹³ However, it was not just a simple manifestation of a powerful culture. Rather, as we will see, it was a dynamic relationship between the dominant cultural pattern and the culture of the local communities that inhabited Byzantine Bulgaria.¹⁹⁴

Now we must take a closer look at the artistic aspects of the Byzantinization process, implemented through the ecclesiastical policy of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this respect, the agency of Archbishop Leo is considerable and instructive. It was important to him to establish the Greek identity of the Ohrid church, in terms of liturgical language and practice, architectural design, saintly cults, and artistic models. By virtue of his strategy, the cathedral church of Hagia Sophia gave shape to a new self-image of the Archbishopric of Ohrid. Strikingly connected with Constantinople are the dedications of the church and its parekklēsia. Leo dedicated the Ohrid cathedral to the Holy Wisdom, following the example of the Great Church of Constantinople, where

he served as chartophylax. Based on their painted programs, the pastophoria served also as parekklēsia dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste and John the Baptist, whose relics were kept at their respective shrines in Constantinople (see above, Fig. 1).¹⁹⁵ The architectural program of Hagia Sophia explicitly established a connection between Ohrid and Constantinople, as well. The interior, cross-domed design, mosaic flooring, exterior architectural sculpture, and, notably, the meticulous incorporation of auxiliary spaces into the overall design exemplify the characteristics of Constantinopolitan architecture.¹⁹⁶ More significantly, Leo invested the painted program of his foundation with complex meanings that conveyed the archbishopric's views on its authority, status, and legitimacy, which has been demonstrated in a series of studies.¹⁹⁷ The lower parts of the sanctuary walls are adorned with the figures of holy bishops, so numerous that they represent an exceptional phenomenon in medieval art. About sixty representatives of the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, numerous local churches, joined by a group of Roman popes, as well as Slavic missionaries Cyril and Bishop Clement, present an ideal image

193 This phenomenon requires further exploration and interpretation. For some remarks and insights into various aspects of this subject, see A. Dostal, "Les relations entre Byzance et les Slaves (en particulier les Bulgares) aux XI^e et XII^e siècles du point de vue culturel," in *Supplementary Papers: Summaries; Thirteenth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, 1966* (Oxford, 1966), 41–42; A. Đurova, "L'intégration du monde slave dans le cadre de la communauté orthodoxe (IX^e-XII^e siècles): Notes préliminaires," *HUkSt* 12–13 (1988): 643–71; M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), 170–72; B. Krsmanović, "O odnosu upravne i crkvene organizacije na području Ohridske arhiepiskopije," in Krsmanović, Maksimović, and Radić, *Vizantijski svet na Balkanu*, 17–39; and A. Delikari, *Η αρχιεπισκοπή Αχρίδων κατά τον Μεσαίωνα: Ο ρόλος της ως ενωτικού παράγοντα στην πολιτική και εκκλησιαστική ιστορία των Σλάβων των Βαλκανίων και του Βυζαντίου* (Thessaloniki, 2014).

194 On the use of term "Bulgaria" in the written sources, see P. Komatina, "Pojam Bugarske u XI i XII veku i teritorija Ohridske arhiepiskopije," in Krsmanović, Maksimović, and Radić, *Vizantijski svet na Balkanu*, 41–56, whose argumentation confirms that the term "Bulgaria" territorially can be identified with the Archbishopric of Ohrid.

195 See Todić, "Arhiepiskop Lav," 121. He considers the possibility that the images in the narthex depicting the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (above the stairs leading upstairs) and the Ascension of the Prophet Elijah into heaven (above the passage in the southern nave) may be connected to parekklēsia situated above the western sections of the lateral aisles that have disappeared. For the reconstruction of the western upper-story parekklēsia, see Schellewald, "Die Architektur der Sophienkirche," 77–82, rek. pl. II. For the churches of Constantinople dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, John the Baptist, the Seven Youths of Ephesus, and Prophet Elijah, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, 50, 114, 143–46, 229, 256, 423–57, 483, 498–502.

196 Todić, "Arhiepiskop Lav," 121.

197 P. Miljković Pepek, "Materijali za makedonskata srednovekovna umetnost: Freskite vo svetilišteto na crkvata sv. Sofija vo Ohrid," *Zbornik: Arheološkiot muzej – Skopje* 1 (1956): 37–67; Radojčić, "Prilozi," 357–69; R. Hamann-Mac Lean and H. Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien vom 11. bis zum frühen 14. Jahrhundert* (Giessen, 1963), 224–25, plans 1–4, pl. 6; A. Grabar, "Deux témoignages archéologiques sur l'autocéphalie d'une église: Prespa et Ochrid," *ZRVI* 8.2 (1964): 163–68, at 167; C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London, 1982), 175–76, 194, 198; Epstein, "The Political Content," 322–24; and A. V. Zakharova and S. V. Mal'ceva, "Khudozhestvennye traditsii i tserkovno-politicheskaia ideologiya v iskusstve Makedonii v epokhu sozdaniia Okhridskoi arhiepiskopii," *VizVrem* 106 (2022): 174–99, at 187–88.

of the Christian ecumene.¹⁹⁸ As Branislav Todić has shown, the echelon of the holy bishops in the sanctuary of Hagia Sophia precisely articulates the ecclesiastical and ideological motifs related to the autocephalous origins of the Ohrid archbishopric and its place in the Christian ecumene.¹⁹⁹

The foregoing short overview of some specificities in the architectural and decorative program of Hagia Sophia should be seen as a model for interpreting the positioning of the Ohrid archbishopric in the local context. While establishing Constantinopolitan liturgical practices and customs, saints' cults, and artistic models, the sophisticated strategies of the archbishopric's ecclesiastical policy also encompassed the integration of notable saints of Slavic descent into the pantheon of Byzantine religious cults, paving the way for the continued coexistence of predominantly Byzantine cultural models and local Slavic spiritual heritage.

Viewed from this perspective, the small artistic commission for the pareklēsis over the diaconicon in the cathedral of Ohrid about half a century later seems understandable. The images of the apostolic martyrdoms bear witness to the deliberate efforts of the religious authorities to introduce and cultivate the saintly cults particularly revered in Constantinople. Besides, more specific meanings may be assigned to them within the cathedral milieu: firstly, the Byzantine theological teaching about the history of the establishment of the church of Christ on earth through the apostles. The use of apostolic imagery in Ohrid's chapel strongly aligns with the core idea of Byzantine ecclesiology about the continuity of the apostolic presence in every church community through the ordination of bishops. This provides a reliable framework for understanding the apostolic cycle as a visual affirmation of the teaching of apostolic succession as the foundation of the bishop's rank, dignity, and authority.²⁰⁰ As acknowledged in scholarship, the apostolic significance as the

constitutive element of the Christian church became, over the course of the time, a prerogative of the local churches.²⁰¹ Each one establishes its authority in accordance with the essential Christian doctrine, affirming the episcopal succession as the unbroken line of bishops throughout history, tracing their ordinations back to the apostles. While the program in the sanctuary conveys the ideas of the communion of the "local" and "universal" church, along with the enduring nature of the Christian church achieved through the continuity of spiritual authority within it, the chapel above it features the concluding events in the lives of the apostles. Whether the imagery in the pareklēsis over the diaconicon responded to the program in the sanctuary can't be established. Nevertheless, the choice of the apostolic theme is certainly well suited to the cathedral nature of Hagia Sophia's earlier pictorial program. How truly significant were the apostles in the cathedral context is evident in the mosaic decoration of the Large Sekreton in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople carried out after 870. Here, busts of the apostles accompanied the four iconophile patriarchs.²⁰²

Who could have commissioned the frescoes for the pareklēsis over the diaconicon? At the turn of the eleventh to the twelfth century, the head of the Archbishopric of Ohrid was Theophylact (from 1089/1090 until possibly after 1125), a student of the renowned Michael Psellos and deacon of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, known to have been one of the most prominent Byzantine intellectuals and religious writers of his time.²⁰³ He was appointed to the autocephalous Archbishopric of Ohrid by the emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) ca. 1090. Theophylact's famous

198 The most significant studies on the holy bishops in the sanctuary of Hagia Sophia include Todić, "Représentations de Papes Romains"; and Todić, "Arhiepiskop Lav."

199 Todić, "Représentations de Papes Romains"; and Todić, "Arhiepiskop Lav."

200 The extensive literature on this subject includes F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Cambridge, MA, 1958); G. E. Demacopoulos, "Apostolic Succession and Byzantine Theology," in Mullett and Ousterhout, *The Holy Apostles*, 67–76; and Walter, *Art and Ritual*, 168, 177.

201 On autocephaly and apostolicity in Byzantium, see E. Morini, "L'autocéphalie et la notion d'apostolicité," in *Autocéphalies: L'exercice de l'indépendance dans les Églises slaves orientales (IX^e-XXI^e siècle)*, ed. M.-H. Blanchet, F. Gabriel, and L. Tatarenko (Rome, 2021), 23–46.

202 R. Cormack and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *DOP* 31 (1977): 177–251, at 219–23, figs. 38–43, D.

203 On Theophylact of Ohrid, see P. Gautier, "L'épiscopat de Théophylacte Héphaistos, archevêque de Bulgarie," *REB* 21 (1963): 159–78; D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford, 1988), 34–82; R. Katičić, "Teofilakt Ohridski," *VizIzvori* 3:257–360; B. Panov, *Srednovekovna Makedonija*, vol. 2, *Teofilakt Ohridski kako izvor za srednovekovnata istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 1985); Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium*, 158–60; and Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*.

letter collection offers valuable information on the Archbishopric of Ohrid and Byzantine Bulgaria.²⁰⁴ Regrettably, the letters offer no direct evidence on the question of his patronage of the paintings above the diaconicon.²⁰⁵ On the other hand, art-historical and archaeological evidence presents a considerably more favorable picture. They speak in favor of economic prosperity and intensive artistic activity, including episcopal patronage, within the borders of the Archbishopric of Ohrid during Theophylact's archiepiscopate.²⁰⁶ Ohrid was a prestigious see, and as scholars have rightly noted, "Theophylact did his best to raise that prestige and to draw the connection of the see to Justinian's birthplace and the new town of Justiniana Prima."²⁰⁷ Relevant to this study is also his attitude toward the local population and its culture. "Far from trying to suppress the traditions of the Bulgarian church, Theophylact sought to appropriate them."²⁰⁸ As the author of the long *Life of St. Clement of Ohrid*, he greatly contributed to the preservation and further development of the cult of St. Clement in line with the increasingly Byzantine character of the archbishopric.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, in his hagiographical portrayal of St. Clement, Theophylact emphasizes the missionary work and episcopal service of the saint, who, due to his deeds, was honored as an apostle to the Slavs.²¹⁰ As interpreted in the scholarship, Theophylact saw himself as continuing the task

of evangelization initiated by St. Clement.²¹¹ In view of this, another question emerges: was it possible that Theophylact also saw the apostles as the perfect model for his missionary work and archdiocesan service? In other words, did he perceive himself as a successor to the apostolic mission on a local level within the realm of the Archbishopric of Ohrid? His attitude can't be deduced from the available sources. However, as earlier scholars have argued, the frequency of the images of mission and teaching of the apostles in Byzantine art in the second half of the ninth and tenth centuries appears to have made a reference to the extensive missionary activities of Byzantium at that time.²¹² These ideological and political implications are also evident in the monumental program at the gallery-level area of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The Pentecost was depicted in the central bay in the south gallery of the Great Church,²¹³ while, as already mentioned, busts of the apostles along with a Deesis, iconophile patriarchs, and other holy figures form the core of the mosaic decoration in a room at the southwestern corner of the gallery identified as the Large Sekreton of the patriarchate.²¹⁴

Turning to the cycle of the Martyrdoms of the Apostles, it seems reasonable to assume that Theophylact during his archiepiscopate commissioned painters to decorate the small parekklesion above the diaconicon. We should draw on the conclusions derived from the iconographic analysis. As suggested in the first section of this paper, the frescoes can be dated to the late eleventh century. Further, we should also take into

204 Panov, *Srednovekovna Makedonija*; Gautier, *Théophylacte d'Achrida*; and Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*.

205 Only one of them indicates his involvement in the addition of one of the paint layers at Prespa. See Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, G 22, 68, 236–37, 301.

206 Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 67–68.

207 M. Mullett, "Patronage in Action: The Problems of an Eleventh-Century Bishop," in *Church and People in Byzantium*, ed. R. Morris (Birmingham, 1990), 125–47, at 142–43; and G. Prinzing, "Entstehung und Rezeption der Justiniana-Prima-Theorie im Mittelalter," *BBulg* 5 (1978): 269–87.

208 Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium*, 171.

209 I. G. Iliev, "The Long Life of Saint Clement of Ohrid: A Critical Edition," *BBulg* 9 (1995): 62–120.

210 According to the *Life of St. Clement*, the Bulgarian ruler Simeon, in the year 893/894, appointed Clement, a Slavic enlightener and disciple of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who had been serving in pastoral ministry for seven years in the mysterious Kutmičnica (Κουτμιτζίτς), as the bishop of Dragoviste and Velica (ἐπίσκοπον Δραγοβίστας ἡτοι Βελίτζας), which were located in the area of present-day southern Albania and encompassed the local Slavic population. See Iliev, "The Long Life," XX.62, lines 814–21.

211 Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium*, 171.

212 On this subject, see S. Der Nersessian, "The Illustrations of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus: Paris Gr. 510; A Study of the Connections between Text and Images," *DOP* 16 (1962): 195–228, at 221, 226; A. Grabar, "L'art religieux et l'empire byzantin à l'époque des macédoniens," in *L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1968) 151–68, at 160–63; A. Grabar, *L'iconoclisme byzantin: Le dossier archéologique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1984), 422–24; and Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 239–57, 261–62, with examples, further references, and the discussion about the connection between mission and martyrdom of the apostles in the visual program of BnF, gr. 510. On the missionary activity during the reigns of Michael III and Basil I, see the recent comprehensive study by P. Komatina, *Crkvena politika Vizantije od kraja ikonoborstva do smrti cara Vasilija I* (Belgrade, 2014), 103–367.

213 C. Mango, *Materials for the Study of the Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul* (Washington, DC, 1962), 35–38, 98, figs. 22, 29–35.

214 Cormack and Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St Sophia," 219–23, figs. 38–43, D.

consideration another secure argument—the early Komnenian stylistic features of the frescoes—recognized in earlier scholarship. Decoration of the chapel could have happened at the same time as the refurbishment of the old decoration in the church of Hagia Sophia in Ohrid.²¹⁵

Final Thoughts

The cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles in the pareklēsis above the diaconicon in the church of Hagia Sophia in Ohrid is very important material for the studies of apostolic martyrdoms in Byzantine art. The original appearance of these images can be reconstructed by comparing it with other representations of the same subject (see above, Table 1); the apostolic cycle contained the deaths of the apostles: Luke, Matthew, Paul, Peter, Andrew, Simon the Zealot, Philip, Bartholomew, and Thomas. It can be assumed that it also included James, son of Zebedee(?), and St. John the Theologian, while visual *comparanda* allow for the hypothesis that Mark could have also been depicted among the Twelve. Tracing the liturgical celebration in honor of the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles allows some important insights into the processes of formation of the collegium of the twelve apostles from the late ninth to the end of the twelfth century and their relation to the cycles dedicated to the martyrdoms of the apostles in Byzantine art of that time. As has been shown in the second section of the paper, the twelve apostles, mentioned in one group of synaxaria and homilies, reflect the composition of the Ohrid pictorial cycle and its closest parallels. Most importantly, however, this “redaction” of the apostolic collegium is to be found in the eleventh- and twelfth-century pieces of literature that were associated with the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople: the poem *On the Twelve Apostles* and Nicholas Mesarites’ ekphrasis of the twelve apostles (see above, Table 2). They provide not only information about the cultic celebration of the holy apostles, but also their fame in the religious culture of Constantinople. Turning to the Ohrid apostolic cycle, it is argued that it drew on iconographic sources that spread from Constantinople.

These frescoes used the most widespread iconographic models of the martyrial death of the apostles in eleventh-century Byzantine art. Hence, as far as

Table 3. Composition of the Cycles That Contain Apostolic Martyrdoms

Belli killise 1, Soğanli	St. Peter, Megali Kastania, Mani Peninsula
Martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee	John the Theologian
Andrew being led to his execution	Paul
Crucifixion of Andrew	Unidentified apostle
Peter and Paul before Nero	St. Demetrios
Peter and Paul being taken to prison	Unidentified apostle
Peter and Paul in prison	Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
Healing of the emperor’s daughter	Matthew
Peter and Paul being led to their execution	Unidentified apostle (Philip?)
Martyrdom of Paul	Mark(?)
	Andrew

iconography is concerned, this pictorial program seems to have been created in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. This inquiry revealed not only the art-historical value of the Ohrid apostolic cycle but also the ways in which it partook of the broader artistic interchange between different visual media. As argued above, the Ohrid cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles is without real parallel in works of Byzantine monumental art of the Middle Byzantine period.²¹⁶ It is, hence, comprehensible within a wider context of menologion imagery of that time. Martyrdoms of the apostles reproduce the iconography of illuminated menologia and menologion icons, but also miniature metalwork created between the ninth and twelfth centuries, for the most part in Constantinople. What was the working method of the painters? It is difficult to surmise that they might have used preparatory sketches or pictorial guides since their existence is securely evidenced only from the Late Byzantine period.²¹⁷ The general arrangement of the

216 However, we should bear in mind the scarce attempts to combine selected scenes of the apostolic mission and martyrdoms. See, e.g., Belli killise 1, Soğanli, Cappadocia. For the bibliography, see above, n. 53. See also Table 3.

217 See L. Bouras, “Working Drawings of Painters in Greece after the Fall of Constantinople,” in *From Byzantium to El Greco: Greek Frescoes and Icons*, ed. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou (Athens, 1987),

215 V. Đurić, *Crkva Svete Sofije u Ohridu* (Belgrade, 1963), VII.

successive scenes from the apostolic cycle seems to indicate that illuminations from some manuscript served as a model or pictorial guide for the painters of the Ohrid chapel, who adapted miniature patterns to the monumental context and architectural setting.²¹⁸ To illustrate this point, we may turn to another subtle element of iconography. The bottom part of most compositions in the Ohrid pareklēsis is well-preserved, which allows us to note one detail that, in the broader iconographic context, connects them with influential and representative models of miniature painting: the distinctive method of painting the ground, most apparent in the depictions of the deaths of Matthew, Peter, Simon the Zealot, Philip, and Bartholomew, in which the usual horizontal line is replaced by an undulating one. A nearly identical motif appears in the miniatures of imperial (*Menologion of Basil II*;²¹⁹ Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W 521;²²⁰ Moscow, State Historical Museum, gr. 183)²²¹ and illustrated Metaphrastian

menologia (Moscow, State Historical Museum, gr. 9;²²² London, British Library, add. 11870;²²³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocc. 230),²²⁴ and later also on some reliefs on the doors of San Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome.²²⁵ The stylization consistently used in the motif of the undulating blue ground on all surviving frescoes suggests that the painter of the Ohrid pareklēsis adapted existing templates to his own artistic approach. The same or similar solutions can be found not only in menologia but also in other kinds of illustrated manuscripts up to the beginning of the twelfth century.²²⁶ This should be understood as one more important indicator for chronological inquiries related to the Ohrid fresco ensemble. In sum, two main points may be drawn from the discussion presented in the first section of this paper. The fact that the apostles' martyrdom iconography is intertwined with menologion illustrations reveals, firstly, the parallel development of the menologion imagery and the cycles of the Martyrdoms of the Apostles and, secondly, close connections in the Middle Byzantine period between the media of book illumination, icon painting, metalwork, mosaic, and painted decoration.²²⁷

54–56, cat. nos. 72–73; M. Vassilaki, *Από τους εικονογραφικούς οδηγούς στα σχέδια εργασίας των μεταβυζαντινών ζωγράφων: Το τεχνολογικό υπόβαθρο της βυζαντινής εικονογραφίας* (Athens, 1995), 60; and M. Vassilaki, "The Art of Angelos," in *The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete*, ed. M. Vassilaki (Farnham, 2010), 114–23, at 117. The possible existence of pictorial guides and drawings in the Byzantine era is discussed by E. Kitzinger, "The Role of Miniature Painting in Mural Decoration," in *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art*, ed. K. Weitzmann et al. (Princeton, NJ, 1975), 99–142; and more recently C. M. Vafeiades, "Painting Work Systems in the Fourteenth Century: The Case of Markov Manastir," *Βυζαντινά* 33 (2013): 1–19. See also I. Hutter, "The Magdalen College 'Musterbuch': A Painter's Guide from Cyprus at Oxford," in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, ed. N. P. Ševčenko and C. Moss (Princeton, NJ, 1999), 117–46. For remarks on the practice of drawing in Byzantium, see J. Lowden, "The Transmission of 'Visual Knowledge' in Byzantium through Illuminated Manuscripts: Approaches and Conjectures," in *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and beyond*, ed. C. Holmes and J. Waring (Leiden, 2002), 59–80, at 76, n. 46.

218 Kitzinger, "The Role of Miniature Painting," discusses how miniature painting could serve as a model for monumental painting.

219 For a selection of examples, see *El "Menologio" de Basilio II*, fols. 12, 20, 73, 113, 137, 139, 182, 215, 222, 319, 334, 344, 389, 406.

220 For a selection of examples, see N. P. Ševčenko, "The Walters 'Imperial' Menologion," *JWalt* 51 (1993): 43–64; and "W.521, 'Imperial' Menologion," The Digital Walters, <https://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/html/W521/>, fols. 56v, 86r, 129v, 151r, 158v.

221 For a selection of examples, see S. Der Nersessian, "Moskovskii menologii," in *Vizantiia: Iuzhnye Slaviane i drevniaia Rus'; Zapadnaia Evropa: Iskustvo i kul'tura; Sb. statei v chest' V. N. Lazareva*, ed. V. N.

Grashchenkov (Moscow, 1973), 94–111, at figs. on 99, 192, 195; and "Sin. gr. 183, Menologion for February–March," Afon.rusarchives, <http://afon.rusarchives.ru/dokumenty/minologiy-na-fevral-i-mart>, fols. 95v, 197.

222 For a selection of examples, see fols. 2, 28, 57, 72v, 125; Popova, Zakharova, and Oretskaiā, *Vizantiiskaia miniatiura*, figs. 56, 286, 288, 290–91.

223 See, e.g., fol. 60: Popova, Zakharova, and Oretskaiā, *Vizantiiskaia miniatiura*, fig. 360.

224 See fol. 3v. The manuscript is available in digitized form on the internet. The respective URL link is listed on the website Digital Bodleian.

225 See the martyrdom of the apostle Philip: Nicolai, *Della Basilica*, pl. XVI.

226 For examples, see Popova, Zakharova, and Oretskaiā, *Vizantiiskaia miniatiura*, figs. 52–53, 62–63, 66, 124, 206, 242–43, 246–47, 266, 330, 349; and Lowden, *The Jaharis Gospel Lectionary*, fig. on XII, figs. 62, 69, 77–78, 92, 94, 100.

227 The link between menologia and cycles of the Martyrdom of the Apostles was not lost in the later period and can be traced in the pictorial decoration of post-Byzantine churches up to the nineteenth century. Death and burials of the apostles continued to be depicted within so-called *martyrologia*—cycles including selected images of the martyrdoms of saints, arranged in synaxarion order. On this subject, see Koukiales, *Μηνολόγια και Μαρτυρολόγια*, 299, 305, 307, 311, 332, 345, 354, 361, 376, 377–78, 382, 422, 425, 436, 452.

As we have seen, the iconography of the Ohrid apostolic cycle springs from the representations on portable objects, all of which share widely understood iconographic formulae. What do these connections and crossovers of specific motifs from one medium to another reveal, not only about the cycle of apostles' martyrdoms in Ohrid but also about the art of Byzantium and beyond? Given that these artworks originated from different sources, were used in diverse contexts, and catered to distinct audiences, what insights do these dynamics of influences and references unveil? Expanding beyond the Ohrid example and exploring a broader cultural context, it becomes impossible to assert that any one medium served as the source for another.²²⁸ It is more probable that a number of the discussed artworks have a common production environment, that is, Constantinople. We should also approach this faithfulness to a pictorial model from another standpoint, however. John Lowden defines such an overarching similarity between images in diverse artistic media and across the history and geography of the Byzantine era as the "transmission of visual knowledge." He highlights two key factors for understanding this phenomenon: "There must have been considerable visual knowledge on the part of the producers of all these works . . . and there is visual knowledge on the part of the consumers of these images."²²⁹ Lowden's remark on "visual knowledge" offers a useful framework for considering our initial questions. If we remain at the foundational level of these reflections, we might assume that works of art, their creators, contexts, and audiences are intricately connected within the established patterns of visual communication in their own time. As a result, in this instance, the depictions of apostolic martyrdoms are equally comprehensible in both public and private spheres, within a monastic setting, and even in the absence of a menologion context. But what were the ways of transmitting this menologion imagery? In recent decades, scholars have focused extensively on the issues of mobility and the circulation of individuals, objects, ideas, and beliefs in Byzantium and beyond.²³⁰ Among the various aspects of the

internal dynamics of Byzantine society, the circulation of art objects and personal agency were not uncommon. The fact that the majority of examples examined in this study involve movable objects expands the possibilities for their transfer, travel, artistic interaction, and transmission of artistic content. The overall appearance and characteristic details of the Ohrid cycle reinforce this notion. While transmission and mobility reveal the flexibility of Byzantine society, menologion imagery remains a conservative genre of Byzantine art.

However, shifting the focus from the cult and iconography of the holy apostles to the spatial, functional, and liturgical approach allowed us to advance the understanding of the painted ensemble in Ohrid's upper-story chapel within its respective contexts. Taking up this methodological framework, the third section has shown that the pareklēsis above the diaconicon was a tiny, elevated, and isolated space with limited access. Situated within the cathedral complex of Hagia Sophia, it served as a private devotional space for the archbishops. The analysis of architectural evidence (apse and niche in the northern wall) and painted program (Deesis with archangels and martyrdoms of the apostles) allows us to evaluate the liturgical activity in the upper-story pareklēsis and its dedication. The small audience could have perceived the entire architectural space of Ohrid's chapel together with its imagery in terms of Byzantine soteriology and the role of saints in securing eternal salvation. While the liturgical significance of the frescoes is crucial for the functional aspects of the chapel, their cathedral context introduces an additional layer of meaning. My attempt to contextualize the apostolic cycle also includes a consideration of the agency of images within their cultural and historical settings. The use of apostolic imagery in Ohrid's chapel strongly aligns with the core idea of Byzantine ecclesiology about the uninterrupted apostolic presence manifested in every church community through the ordination of bishops and thus contributes to the ecclesiastical policy of Ohrid.

As I hope to have demonstrated, every aspect of the cycle depicting apostolic martyrdoms points to

228 Already noticed by Ševčenko, "Synaxaria and Menologia," 326.

229 Lowden, "The Transmission of 'Visual Knowledge,'" 63.


230 See the contributions in the following volumes: R. Macrides, ed., *Travel in the Byzantine World: Papers from the Thirty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Aldershot, 2002); M. Ivanova

and H. Jeffery, eds., *Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds* (Leiden, 2019); M. Mitrea, ed., *Holiness on the Move: Mobility and Space in Byzantine Hagiography* (Abingdon, 2023); and C. Rapp et al., eds., *Mobility and Migration in Byzantium: A Sourcebook* (Göttingen, 2023).

Constantinople—from the architectural design of the upper-story chapel, dedication to the holy apostles, and the iconography to the composition of the apostolic group. Finally, looking beyond the painted decoration itself to external sources of evidence produced the proposal that Archbishop Theophylact, one of the most prominent Byzantine intellectuals and religious writers of his time, the head of the Archbishopric of Ohrid at the turn of the eleventh to the twelfth century, could have been personally involved in the design of the paintings of the pareklēsis above the diaconicon in his cathedral church. Did he know the above-mentioned poem *On the Twelve Apostles*, attributed to his teacher Michael Psellos? Was it possible that he followed some significant monumental cycle of the Martyrdom of the Apostles in Constantinople?

Byzantine sources are silent on this, and the questions must remain open. In bringing this paper to a close, I would like to highlight the larger significance of the Ohrid apostolic cycle within the broader context of Byzantine art. As the core element of this small and incomplete painted program, it possesses a specificity that makes it a valuable contribution to the examination of painted programs in subsidiary chapels, especially within cathedrals.

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